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Soldier allowed to have beard because he's Norse Pagan

Stars and Stripes

First the Sikhs. Now the Pagans.

A member of the Norse Pagan Faith, serving in the 795th Military Police Battalion at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., has been granted permission to wear a beard under a 2017 Army policy directive that makes it easier for soldiers to receive exemptions from grooming and appearance regulations if they conflict with their religious beliefs.

"In observance of your Heathen, Norse Pagan faith, you may wear a beard, in accordance with Army uniform and grooming standards for Soldiers with approved religious accommodations provided in Army regulation (AR) 670-1," said a memo signed by Col. Curtis M. Schroeder, commander of the 14th Military Police Brigade.

The 2017 policy changed allowed brigade-level commanders to authorize the exemption based on religious grounds — and with some limits on the length and appearance of the beard.

[SEE BEARD ON PAGE 7](#)

iStock photo



Admiral out as VA nominee

Trump's pick for secretary withdraws amid allegations

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Rear Adm. Ronny Jackson withdrew from consideration as secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs early Thursday morning and denied allegations raised against him during the past two days of drinking on the job and doling out controlled substances.

"Going into this process, I expected tough questions about how to best care for our veterans, but I did not expect to have to dignify baseless and anonymous attacks on my character and integrity," Jackson, the White House physician, said Thursday in a statement.

[SEE ADMIRAL ON PAGE 2](#)

Rear Adm. Ronny Jackson's nomination to become the next VA secretary already was on shaky ground before allegations, which have yet to be substantiated, surfaced Tuesday.

MANUEL BALCE CENETA/AP

Report: Culture of risk-taking, complacency factors in Niger ambush

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

A culture of excessive risk-taking, poor training and complacency were factors in the deaths of four U.S. soldiers killed in an October ambush in the West African country of Niger, a Pentagon investigation has determined.

The findings in the 6,000-page report, which

were described to The Wall Street Journal by military officials, include recommendations from Defense Secretary Jim Mattis on steps needed to improve training and chain-of-command protocols.

The ambush in the Nigerian village of Tongo Tongo, near that country's border with Mali, has roiled the special operations community

and has cast a spotlight on high-risk military operations that have occurred far from the public eye.

The Wall Street Journal reported that there were mission command failures at multiple levels. For example, one instance highlighted in the report said an officer copied and pasted

[SEE REPORT ON PAGE 7](#)

MILITARY

Admiral: Co-workers brought concerns about Jackson to Senate Dems

FROM FRONT PAGE

The decision came after details emerged late Wednesday of allegations made by 23 of Jackson's current and former coworkers in the White House Medical Unit. They described him as an unstable leader who drank on duty and handed out prescription medication, including opioids, without keeping records of it.

The allegations, which have not been substantiated, were compiled in a summary provided to reporters Wednesday by Democrats on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

"The allegations against me are completely false and fabricated," Jackson said. "If they had any merit, I would not have been selected, promoted and entrusted to serve in such a sensitive and important role as physician to three presidents over the past 12 years."

Minutes after Jackson withdrew, President Donald Trump defended him in an interview with Fox & Friends and blamed Democrats for Jackson's failed nomination, describing them as "obstructionists."

Trump specifically went after Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., the ranking Democrat on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. Trump said Tester has a "big price to pay in Montana." Tester is up for re-election in November.

"They're trying to destroy a man," Trump said. "These are false allegations."

Co-workers described occasions that Jackson was drunk when he was expected to report to duty in the instance that the president had a health issue.

Tester said Thursday in a statement that it was his constitutional responsibility to "make sure the veterans of this nation get a strong, thoroughly vetted leader."

Jackson's nomination became imperiled Tuesday when Tester and Sen. Johnny Isakson, the Republican chairman of the Senate committee, decided together to postpone his confirmation hearing because of the new allegations.

"The next secretary must have a commitment to reform a strained health care system and a willingness to stand up to special interests who want to privatize the VA," Tester said. "My sleeves are rolled up and ready to work with Chairman Isakson to vet and confirm a secretary who is fit to run the VA."

Trump told Fox & Friends that he had a new nominee in mind. He declined to name the individual, but said the potential nominee is "somebody great" with "political



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Rear Adm. Ronny Jackson withdrew from consideration as President Donald Trump's choice to be secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs on Thursday.

capability."

Before the allegations against Jackson emerged, lawmakers and veterans groups already had concerns Jackson lacked the experience necessary for the job. The VA is the second-largest federal agency, with more than 375,000 employees, and operates on a nearly \$200 billion budget.

Jackson has been part of the White House Medical Unit since 2006 and has worked as physician to the president since 2013, serving under Trump and former President Barack Obama.

Co-workers described to senators multiple occasions that Jackson was drunk while on call when he was expected to report to duty in the instance that the president had a health issue. At least once, Jackson couldn't be reached because he was "passed out drunk in his hotel room," the coworkers

alleged. They told senators that Jackson got drunk at a Secret Service going-away party and wrecked a government vehicle.

Multiple co-workers said White House staff nicknamed him "Candyman" because he would hand out "whatever prescriptions they sought" without paperwork. They portrayed him as a "vindictive" leader and "intolerable" as he gained power within the White House Medical Unit.

The White House supported Jackson during the past few days, and in an attempt to vindicate him officials released multiple positive evaluations Obama wrote about Jackson.

Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee-Sanders said Wednesday that Jackson went through thorough FBI vetting and three prior investigations, none of which turned up any areas of concern.

Trump told Fox & Friends there was "no proof" of the allegations.

"He has a perfect record, this beautiful record," he said.

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, or IAVA, responded to the news of Jackson's withdrawal Thursday, describing the ordeal as a "painful and tumultuous chapter for VA and our nation's veterans."

"It's been an unprecedented time of chaos, political agendas and uncertainty. And millions of veterans and their families have paid the price," IAVA wrote in a statement. "Our community is exhausted by the unnecessary and seemingly never-ending drama. VA's reputation is damaged, staff is demoralized, momentum is stalled and the future is shockingly unclear."

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MILITARY

Mattis promises re-energized fight against ISIS in Syria

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — American troops will be key in a soon-to-be re-energized campaign against remaining Islamic State fighters in Syria, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told senators Thursday on Capitol Hill, pledging the U.S. was not preparing to pull its forces from the war-torn country.

"This is an ongoing fight right now," Mattis told Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., during a hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee. "We're continuing the fight, and we're going to expand it with more regional support."

Shaheen and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., asked Mattis to explain recent comments by President Donald Trump indicating the commander in chief was considering the removal of about 2,000 American troops in Syria alongside U.S. advisers to Kurdish-Arab forces battling ISIS.

"We want to come home, we'll be coming home, but we want to leave a strong and lasting footprint and that was a big part of our discussion," Trump said Tuesday during a news conference at the White House alongside French President Emmanuel Macron. He added later, "So, we'll see what happens. But

we're going to be coming home relatively soon."

Mattis told the senators that any removal of American forces would be based on conditions on the battlefield and not a timeline demanded by the president.

Graham, long a proponent for greater American intervention in Syria, asked Mattis whether he supported pulling all American troops out of Syria once ISIS is completely destroyed. The senator compared such a departure to the U.S.'s withdrawal from Iraq in 2011, which officials have said contributed to the rise of ISIS across Syria and Iraq.

"I'm confident that we would probably regret it," Mattis said.

The defense secretary indicated American forces would be needed to train local Syrian forces properly to hold the territory the U.S.-backed coalition has liberated from ISIS. Those forces are maturing, but much more training would be needed to ensure ISIS or another group like it did not re-emerge in the area, he said.

Additionally, operations against ISIS, which largely have stalled in recent months, should surge in the coming days, Mattis told Shaheen. The French have added special forces to the fight and some Middle Eastern nations will increase their contributions soon,



JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis testifies about the Department of Defense budget posture alongside Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing Thursday on Capitol Hill in Washington.

he said. Mattis did not elaborate on what that additional support would include.

American intelligence officials estimate ISIS retains more than 1,000 fighters in eastern Syria. The militants, who once controlled huge swaths of territory across Syria and Iraq, are now confined to two small towns in the Middle Euphrates River Valley, about 2 percent of the land that it once occupied, Army Col.

Ryan Dillon, a spokesman for the U.S.-led anti-ISIS campaign, said Tuesday. Those villages — Hain and Dashiha — are surrounded by U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, he said. But offensive operations against ISIS have been slow-moving since February, as some Kurdish SDF fighters have fled north, where Turkish-backed militants have targeted Kurdish groups near Syria's border with Turkey.

Pentagon officials have said some Kurdish fighters have returned to the Middle Euphrates River Valley recently, likely a factor in the optimism Mattis expressed Thursday. The officials, including Dillon, have never indicated how many Kurds fled the fight nor how many have returned since.

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House panels push pay hike, ships, innovation in DOD policy plan

By CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Several House panels on Thursday issued their first wave of proposals for the next defense policy plan with aims to boost military pay and benefits, troop levels, innovation efforts, weapons and equipment.

The proposals, approved before several House Armed Services Committee subpanels, include the highest military pay raise in nearly a decade, an end-strength boost across all the services, an extension to special pay and bonuses for service members, and new ships, planes and other acquisitions.

The effort appears to build on new momentum to grow the size and might of the military in response to China's and Russia's growing capabilities as laid out in President Donald Trump's budget request for the Pentagon issued earlier this year.

For example, provisions of the House budget proposals "provide our warfighters, military families and retirees the care and support they need, deserve and have earned," Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee subpanel on military personnel issues, said Thursday in a hearing.

In recent weeks, the House Armed Services Committee, its subpanels and its Senate counterparts have held dozens of hearings to discuss the 2019 budget pri-

orities for each of the branches as well as a wide-ranging list of challenges facing the military. The hearings play into the development of the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, which directs policy and spending plans for the Defense Department.

The proposals follow Trump's February rollout of the Pentagon's proposed 2019 budget, which asked for a hike in funding to \$686.1 billion. Some experts said the effort was likely to get a positive response on Capitol Hill, especially with a deal already in place to break statutory spending limits and with Congress invested in military improvements during an election year.

"We are not yet out of the woods," Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., acting chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Thursday during a Pentagon budget hearing. "We cannot dig ourselves out of the current readiness crisis in just two years. It will take much longer to undo the damage that has been done the past eight years in military."

The Pentagon's request for fiscal year 2019, which begins Oct. 1, sought an increase of more than 15,000 active-duty troops and investment in key modernization programs. Thursday's proposals showed House lawmakers are on board with that plan, so far.

The Pentagon's budget also requested more to build 10 ships, including three guided-missile destroyers, two Virginia-

class submarines and one littoral combat ship. It also requested more than 400 new aircraft, including 77 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, 24 F/A-18E Super Hornet fighters, 60 AH-64 Apache helicopters and 68 UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

Recent budget deals are "now providing the predictability and sufficient funding needed to continue implementing the 2018 National Defense Strategy," Defense Secretary Jim Mattis testified Thursday before the Senate Armed Services Committee. Now, the 2019 proposed budget "requests the resources necessary to fulfill the department's enduring mission to provide the combat-credible military forces needed to deter war, and if deterrence fails, to win in any conflict."

While final figures proposed under the House plan remain to be seen, there is already a push to go beyond the Pentagon's request in some cases.

For example, the House Armed Services Committee subpanel on seapower and projection forces is weighing the purchase of three additional battle force ships, including one Ford-class aircraft carrier and two additional littoral combat ships — up from the one requested by the Pentagon.

The panel, in its earliest proposal so far, also known as its "mark," also is seeking a more aggressive schedule for the purchase of Virginia-class submarines, full funding for the B-21 Raider bomber program, and other efforts, said Rep. Rob Wittman,

R-Va., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee subpanel on seapower and projection forces.

"As Russia and China grow their naval presence, it is absolutely critical that we continue to invest in and rebuild our Navy," Wittman said. "To achieve distributed lethality, we must provide the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force the tools and resources they need to deter our adversaries, support our allies, and respond to threats around the globe, I believe this mark does that."

The budget plans also would ignite the Pentagon's rebuilding of its nuclear infrastructure and would give troops a 2.6 percent pay hike, the largest in 9 years.

The budget proposal's provisions "will provide the military services the flexibility to manage and retain a quality force," said Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., the ranking Democrat for the House Armed Services Committee subpanel on military personnel issues.

This week's effort sets the tone for a long debate ahead, marking the earliest stage of an arduous process for Congress to reach a deal on the NDAA.

The full House Armed Services Committee is expected to vote on its proposed defense policy plan, H.R. 5515, as early as May 9. Its Senate counterpart is expected to start its mark-up process in late May.

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PACIFIC

Korean leaders' summit highly choreographed

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will walk across the border Friday to begin a highly choreographed summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. But it's not all about them.

The high-stakes talks will be a prelude to the upcoming meeting between Kim and President Donald Trump, who has said he will accept nothing less than an agreement by the North to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Moon, who was swept into office last year after his hard-line predecessor was ousted, faces a delicate balancing act in keeping both Kim and Trump at the table after a year that saw the two men trading personal insults and threats of nuclear war.

That won't leave a lot of room for inter-Korean relations because any economic concessions would risk violating international economic sanctions aimed at punishing the North for its nuclear ambitions.

South Korean officials insist denuclearization and reduced military tensions will be the top agenda items, followed by closer economic and social ties.

"Unless North Korea makes progress on the nuclear issue, no improvement can be made in relations," senior presidential adviser Moon Chung-in said Thursday at a news conference.

"Our government does not want to send the wrong message to Washington," he added.

That will make Moon's job considerably harder than that of his liberal predecessors, who met with Kim's father in 2000 and 2007.

Those summits resulted in the establishment of the joint Kaesong industrial complex and reunions for families who were torn apart by the 1950-53 war, which ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

The goodwill fell apart as North Korea reneged on denuclearization promises and conservative governments took power in Seoul.

Moon faces even more of an uphill battle after more than a year of animosities, with the North demonstrating rapid progress toward its goal of developing a nuclear weapons that could target the U.S. mainland.

"So much weight is on the second summit that maybe they can't push the inter-Kore-

an relations as much as they'd like to," said John Delury, a professor of international relations at Seoul's Yonsei University.

No date or venue have been set for what would be the first-ever U.S.-North Korea summit, although Trump has said it will be in May or early June.

Improving relations

Experts said the inter-Korean summit isn't likely to result in a major announcement on denuclearization but could reach a framework, or at least a declaration of intent, to pave the way for Trump.

"I think North Korea will announce its plan with some conditions. I think these conditions are what will matter," said Geun Lee, a professor of international politics at Seoul National University.

All sides already have made some concessions.

Kim has announced a moratorium on intercontinental ballistic missile tests and said the North will close its northeastern nuclear testing site.

Skeptics noted that Kim could resume missile tests at any time. A group of Chinese scientists also has said it believes the mountain covering the nuclear testing site has collapsed already.

But he's welcomed the move, calling it "Big progress."

The U.S. and South Korean militaries, meanwhile, decided to suspend joint war games on Friday in a nod to the North, which considers the military exercises a rehearsal for an invasion.

That followed an agreement to postpone the start of the annual drills as Moon lobbied the North to join the Winter Olympics, putting the diplomatic process in motion.

A summit with Trump also would be a major gain for Kim, as a meeting with a sitting U.S. president has been a longtime goal for the regime.

Cheong Seong-chang, director of the Unification Strategy Studies program at the Sejong Institute, said distrust between the U.S. and North Korea is too high for the two countries to reach an agreement alone.

"The South Korean government is showing great willingness to establish good relations with Pyongyang," he said at a forum last week. "It also has an intimate alliance with the U.S. That means South Korea has the ability to mediate the differences be-



Courtesy of the Inter-Korean Summit Press Corps

Chairs surround the table that will be used for the summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in. The oval-shaped table is exactly 2,018 millimeters wide to highlight the historic 2018 summit.

tween North Korea and the U.S.

"If the inter-Korean summit can create a working draft that can be finalized at the Kim-Trump summit, the latter is more likely to proceed successfully," he added.

No details spared

First up to bat, South Korea isn't taking any chances, sparing no details in planning the historic meeting.

Moon will be at the Military Demarcation Line to welcome Kim, who will become the first North Korean leader to enter the southern section of the heavily fortified border region since the armistice.

The two leaders then will walk together for about 10 minutes to a plaza, where they will inspect a South Korean honor guard, presidential spokesman Im Jong-seok told reporters Thursday.

The men will sign a guest book and will take a photo together at the so-called Peace House before beginning formal talks. Kim will be accompanied by a high-powered delegation, including his sister, Kim Yo Jong, although it wasn't yet clear if his wife, Ri Sol Ju, will attend, Im said.

Following the first round of talks, the leaders will plant a pine tree on the border using a mixture of soil and water from mountains and rivers in both countries, according to Im.

There also will be a stone plaque for the tree engraved with the phrase "peace and prosperity are planted" as well as the leaders' signatures.

Moon and Kim then will stroll together to a footbridge before convening for after-

noon talks, which are expected to be followed by a joint agreement and a banquet.

The conference table that will be used for the talks is exactly 2,018 millimeters wide, commemorating the year the meeting is being held, according to the South Korean president's office.

The menu for the banquet will include versions of Swiss dishes inspired by the fact that Kim is believed to have gone to school in Switzerland.

One dessert being offered is a mango mousse decorated with a blue map symbolizing a unified Korean Peninsula. The map will include a dot representing the small island of Dokdo, which is at the center of a territorial dispute with Japan. Tokyo has protested the inclusion of the island.

The main dishes will include fish from the southern area, where Moon was born to North Korean refugees, as well as croaker and rice from the towns of former South Korean presidents the late Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, who met with Kim's father in the previous summits in 2000 and 2007.

Grilled beef from cattle at a ranch in the central town of Seosan also will be served. The Chinese study makes sense and is based on well-understood research, said Rowena Lohman, a seismologist at Cornell University who wasn't part of the work. She said she believes there's an international effort that monitors those tests for radiation.

A study published last month by the journal, authored by a team led by Liu Junqing at the earthquake bureau in Jilin province along the border with North Korea, found similar results of the Sept. 3 explosion. It described the aftermath that followed seconds later as most likely a "rapid destruction of an explosion-generated cracked rock chimney due to cavity collapse."

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Geologists say N. Korea's nuclear test site likely collapsed

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN
Associated Press

BEIJING — Research by Chinese geologists suggests that the mountain above North Korea's main nuclear test site likely has collapsed, rendering it unsafe for further testing and requiring that it be monitored for any leaking radiation.

The findings by the scientists at the University of Science and Technology of China may shed new light on North Korean President Kim Jong Un's announcement that his country was ceasing its testing program ahead of planned summit meetings with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Donald Trump.

The results also support some of the findings of an earlier study by another group of Chinese researchers that was published

last month by the journal Geophysical Research Letters.

Nuclear explosions release enormous amounts of heat and other forms of energy, and the North's largest test in September was believed early on to have rendered the site in northeastern North Korea unstable.

Chinese authorities have said they've detected no radiation risk from samples collected along the border. Calls to those departments were not immediately answered Thursday.

The data in the latest Chinese study were collected following the most powerful of North Korea's six nuclear device tests on Sept. 3, which is believed to have triggered four earthquakes in the following weeks. The yield of the bomb was estimated at more than 100 kilotons of TNT, at least 10

times stronger than anything the North had tested previously. (The bomb the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945 had a yield of about 15 kilotons.)

The University of Science and Technology of China paper, authored by Tian Dongdong, Yao Jiawen and Wen Lianxing, said the first of those earthquakes, which occurred 8½ minutes after the explosion, was "an onsite collapse toward the nuclear test center," while those that followed were an "earthquake swarm" in similar locations.

"In view of the research finding that the North Korea nuclear test site at Mantapans has collapsed, it is necessary to continue to monitor any leakage of radioactive materials that may have been caused by the collapse," the authors said in a summary dated Monday and viewed Wednesday on

the university's website.

The study is peer-reviewed and has been accepted for publication by the journal Geophysical Research Letters.

The Chinese study makes sense and is based on well-understood research, said Rowena Lohman, a seismologist at Cornell University who wasn't part of the work. She said she believes there's an international effort that monitors those tests for radiation.

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PACIFIC

Groups keep focus on N. Korean rights abuses

BY KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Living in North Korea, Kim Seong-min risked his life to secretly listen to banned South Korean music and news before defecting to the enemy state.

So imagine his surprise at the sight of the North's leader, Kim Jong Un, in the audience clapping along to songs by Red Velvet and other K-pop stars during a recent concert in Pyongyang.

"The regime killed North Koreans deemed anti-socialists after finding them listening to South Korean music," he said in a telephone interview. "By the way, Kim attended the concert so he is anti-socialist and should be tried in the people's court."

North Korea is considered one of the most repressive countries in the world, with a regime that uses public executions, arbitrary detention and tight restrictions on personal liberties to maintain firm control over the population of 25 million.

Rights groups say Kim — the third leader in a family dynasty that has ruled the country since it was founded 70 years ago — has cracked down even more as he moved to consolidate power after his father died of a heart attack in 2011.

Now many are worried that South Korea and the United States will sacrifice concerns about human rights abuses to keep the North at the table amid a diplomatic surge aimed at easing tensions and ridding the communist state of its nuclear weapons.

"The world has already forgotten about human rights ... since North Korea is said to have expressed its will to denuclearize," said Kim Seong-min, a former military monitor who escaped from the North in 1997 and went on to found the Free North Korea Radio station to broadcast critical information into the isolated country.



A group of South Korean K-Pop stars meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang on April 2.

Courtesy of KCNA

Human Rights Watch and other organizations have called on South Korea to raise the issue during President Moon Jae-in's summit with Kim Jong Un on Friday, which is expected to set the tone for a subsequent meeting between Kim and President Donald Trump.

The United Nations' independent expert on human rights in North Korea also warned that ignoring the issue would undermine a nuclear deal, not help it. "A denuclearization deal will remain fragile if it sidelines the rights and needs of the (North Korean) population," Tomas Ojea Quintana said Wednesday in a statement. "[North Korea] has proven to be a tough negotiator, and not even mentioning human rights at this very first stage of negotiations would be a misstep and a lost opportunity."

The U.S. and rights groups have found evidence of massive human rights violations, including gulag-like penal camps believed to be housing as many as 130,000 political prisoners.

Quintana suggested starting with less controversial issues such as calling for reunions of family members separated by the war, the release of detained foreigners or addressing the "deter-

imental impact" of international sanctions on the North Korean population.

Kim's appearance at the concert this month was part of what critics have dubbed a "charm offensive" that began with his agreement to participate in the Olympics and expanded rapidly to include the historic summits.

The peace initiatives have reversed the mood on the divided peninsula after months of threats and missile tests that generated the worst crisis on the divided peninsula in decades.

Trump also has toned down his rhetoric after mocking Kim as "little rocket man" and blasting the regime as a "cruel dictatorship" and "a hell that no person deserves." He even invited a North Korean defector to his State of the Union address as his administration sought to highlight the regime's brutality.

But the issue has largely disappeared from the debate ahead of the summits as negotiators try to pave the way for an agreement on denuclearization.

Trump called Kim "very honorable" during a press conference Tuesday.

U.S. and South Korean officials insist they're maintaining pressure on the North to reform its

ways.

The U.S. blasted Pyongyang for its "egregious human rights violations" in its annual human rights report on Friday.

"I don't think you'll see a diminishment in our concern about the issue even as we try to work the nuclear issue," said Michael Kozak, of the State Department. "It's not a trade-off."

He couldn't say whether Trump would press the issue during his summit with Kim, although the president has promised to push for the release of abducted Japanese and detained Americans.

Moon, a former human rights attorney and the son of North Korean refugees, also is expected to avoid the topic during his meeting with Kim on Friday in the heavily fortified border region.

Underscoring the sensitivities involved, the North slammed Seoul for welcoming a routine March 23 U.N. resolution that condemned "systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations" that "in many instances constitute crimes against humanity."

The state-run Korean Central News Agency warned that raising the issue could jeopardize future dialogue, calling it "an open political provocation." South Korea should understand that "slandering" the North's human rights situation "at the present time when everything is at the beginning will be tantamount to an act of throwing a stone to the thin, ice-like North-South relations," KCNA said.

Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wa acknowledged that the issue was not likely to be on the table when Moon and Kim meet, although she insisted that Seoul maintains a "firm stance" against what she called the "dire human rights situation" in the North.

"In order to enhance dialogue, the topics that both sides have agreed upon will be discussed," she told reporters last month. "So to include it in the agenda of South-North dialogue, I think

the government will need more preparation."

Proponents of putting the issue on hold argue that focusing on human rights now could derail a nuclear deal and reforms would be better served with increased engagement between the two countries.

Moon Chung-in, a senior presidential aide, also has been quoted as stressing the need to focus on denuclearization efforts. "If you put human rights and democracy issues together with the nuclear issues, then North Korea will regard this as a hostile act by the United States and they will never make concessions on the nuclear issue," the adviser said recently.

Sokeel Park, the South Korea country director for the refugee aid organization Liberty in North Korea, is optimistic that North Korean society is starting to push for reforms from within but said the issue still needs to be raised. He said a failure to do so would feed into the North Korean argument that their rivals use human rights concerns as a political tool. "I would hope that the South Korean government could find creative ways to raise these kind of issues with the North Korean government and show there needs to be progress in social and people issues, not just military," he said. "For it to be credible it needs to be consistent, not just when it's convenient."

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US, S. Korea suspend war games for weekend summit

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The United States and South Korea will suspend joint war games Friday to help ensure a successful summit between President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, military officials said.

The talks will lay the groundwork for a subsequent summit between Kim and President Donald Trump. No date or venue have been set for the first-ever U.S.-North Korean summit, although Trump has said it will be in May or early June.

"The military will exert all efforts to ensure stable support for the inter-Korean summit," the U.S.-led Combined Forces Command and South Korea's military said in a joint statement.

Thursday's decision was the latest in a series of adjustments to the annual springtime drills as diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the crisis over the North's nuclear weapons program gained momentum.

The allies agreed earlier this year to delay the start of the exercises until after the Winter Olympics to help the South persuade the North to join the games and begin talks.

They resumed the field exercise dubbed Foal Eagle on April 1 and a computer-simulated, command-post exercise known as Key Resolve on Monday.

Military officials said the two-week Key Resolve would be suspended Friday during the historic summit and would resume Monday, as previously scheduled. The statement stressed the de-

cision was based "on a common assessment that the objectives and desired outcomes" of the first week of Key Resolve "have been achieved."

The statement didn't mention Foal Eagle, which South Korea's military said would last only four weeks this year, half the duration of last year's exercise.

U.S. Forces Korea spokesman Col. Chad Carroll said Foal Eagle will continue into May.

But the Yonhap News Agency quoted a military official as saying the two sides have effectively wrapped up the training Thursday and "most of the programs in the Foal Eagle exercise will finish today."

Joint military exercises between Seoul and Washington usually infuriate Pyongyang, which considers them a rehearsal for an

invasion despite the allies' insistence they're defensive in nature.

The North often responds with missile tests and fiery rhetoric.

Kim suggested to visiting South Korean envoys that he would not object to the springtime drills, and North Korea's state-run media has been largely silent on the subject.

Seoul and Washington also have kept the games more low-profile than usual, dialing back their messaging and not deploying supersonic bombers and other strategic assets.

The U.S. has about 28,500 servicemembers based in the South, which remains technically at war with the North after their 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

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MILITARY

Wounded Warrior Project rebound after dismal '17

By DIANNA CAHN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Wounded Warrior Project released dismal financial records this week for its 2017 fiscal year showing yet another precipitous fall in donations. But while the documents show a \$91 million drop-off in contributions and grants, the nonprofit organization said those figures don't tell the story now.

Chief Executive Officer Mike Linnington said Thursday that the Wounded Warrior Project has finally turned the corner after a long, difficult slump in donations.

The organization, which offers myriad services to wounded veterans and their families, has seen four quarters of consecutive growth — compared with the same time frames in the previous year, he said. After a better-than-expected giving season at the end of 2017, WWP is ahead of its projected fundraising for 2018.

Those figures will not be reflected until financials are released in 2019.

"If you don't know '18 and you look strictly at '15, '16 and '17 (financials), you've got to scratch your head," Linnington said. "We are growing as an organization, growing in our impact to warriors."

The 2017 records show donations plunged to \$211.5 million in 2017, marking a drop of more than \$160 million in the two years since a scandal over spending rattled donors and sent the organization into a tailspin.

Linnington said donations in the first two quarters of the 2017 fiscal year, which started Oct. 1, 2016, were abysmal, bringing down results for the entire fiscal year. October through December usually marks the Christmas and end-of-tax-year giving season — the largest donation period annually for nonprofits. Financial records show WWP for the first time spent more than it brought in, with a deficit of slightly more than \$5

million in expenses to revenue.

But as WWP continued its work to rebuild donor confidence, it finally has started to rebound, Linnington said. By the spring of last year, he said WWP's donations were on the rise compared with the same period in 2016 and things have been improving.

Seeing the turnaround, WWP projected better numbers for 2018 — an estimated \$25 million above the 2017 contributions — and donors have exceeded those projections so far, Linnington said. The 2017 giving season brought in more than \$40 million in donations, and the first two quarters of fiscal year 2018 show that upward trend is continuing, he said.

2018 budget revealed

Hoping to drive home the good news, Linnington revealed the organization's projected 2018 budget — something he previously had been reluctant to do.

"We hit our low mark in '16 and of course that is reflected in the 2017 (financial records)," he said. "In '18, our budget (donations) is \$236 million and we are \$14 million ahead of glide path to get to that number. So we are really doing well in terms of revenue to budget."

That's not say Wounded Warrior Project is fully out of the hole. Last year's donations set a low bar compared with the charity's glory days. The organization had reached contributions of \$372 million before the scandal and it had projected to grow by now to a more than \$400 million charity.

But Linnington said the organization is "squeezing every nickel from every dollar" and reaching more veterans than ever — providing services for 132,000 veterans last year. The charity also benefited from a stronger economy, adding almost \$10 million in earnings on publicly traded securities, according to the documents.

And it is finally looking at growing programs again.

"As revenues continue to surpass our expectations, we will spend more money on programs," Linnington said.

Hard road to recovery

The charity — founded after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks — had been growing exponentially for years when, in early 2016, two major news organizations ran stories charging that WWP was spending lavishly on staff events and was suffering a toxic work environment.

It also came under fire for spending too high of a percentage on fundraising — a criticism that landed it on the watch list of Charity Navigator, which evaluates nonprofits.

The spending allegations later were debunked by a forensic accounting of WWP's finances, an independent examination by an expert on nonprofits and an investigation by the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance. Charity Navigator eventually removed it from the watch list. But with donations in free fall in March 2016, the WWP board fired its top two executives.

Linnington, who was brought in a few months later, took action to stem the hemorrhaging. He cut positions and trimmed excesses in event spending. The charity also cut a few programs, partnered with peer-to-peer, mental health and family-oriented veterans charities to share the burden and the benefits, and closed facilities in areas with smaller populations of veterans.

For a while, the organization slowed its television ads but they have returned to the airwaves since, though Linnington said many of them now air late at night, when the ads are cheaper but still reach many veterans who are isolated. By investing in messages that reach not just their donors but also their beneficiaries, the organization can consider part of that fundraising expense



Joe Gnomelski/Stars and Stripes

Retired Army Lt. Gen. Michael S. Linnington, CEO of the Wounded Warrior Project, attends a hearing on Capitol Hill in March 2017.

its programming budget — one of the issues that came to light during the investigations.

The 2017 financial records show cuts continued, with spending on programming at \$165.8 million — a \$47.2 million drop from the previous year and \$96 million less than it was spending on programs in 2015.

The organization has maintained it continued to invest in mental health and physical wellness programs, and Linnington said it will be growing program spending in 2018 to close to \$200 million.

He said mental health programs will grow from \$58 million to almost \$63 million and physical health and wellness programs will grow by 20 percent. The organization also plans to increase spending from \$24 million to \$29 million for its independence programs that enable the most severely wounded warriors to remain living at home rather than being institutionalized, he said.

Worthy mission

With good news coming on the heels of such bad news, the 2017 financials raised some eyebrows. Nonprofit and fundraising expert Doug White, a former Columbia University professor who has just completed a book about the lessons for nonprofits on what happened at the Wounded Warrior Project, said he hopes the projections for the charity are accurate but is skeptical that the rebound will happen quickly after slowing

its marketing the way it did.

"These kinds of things have long-term effects," he said. "I think there is probably going to be some more fallout."

In his examination, White concluded that when the board fired its top executives though no financial wrongdoing was validated, it made a costly mistake that served to undermine long-term donor confidence. He said he wished Linnington could acknowledge that "bad decision" as he talks about rebuilding the organization. Linnington was not there at the time, and as CEO, he now answers to the board.

That said, White noted WWP still has a strong draw because its mission is sound.

"I tell people today that they should continue to donate to Wounded Warrior Project because it's a really good organization," he said. "I am hoping they will do well."

Linnington said the full-year, month-over-month improvement gave him the confidence to believe that donors were back. He said he was so optimistic about Wounded Warrior Project's positive turn that the organization has 70 job openings, which would bring the employee total to 700. At its lowest, WWP had cut to 532 positions.

"We are an organization that delivers programs through our employees," he said. "I would not have 70 jobs on the street if I am not growing."

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Pentagon hires firm with ties to World Trade Center project for Gitmo

By CAROL ROSENBERG
Miami Herald

The Pentagon has awarded a nearly \$19 million contract to expand the war court complex at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, with top-secret office space for lawyers defending the accused plotters of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The builder is a subsidiary of the construction giant that helped rebuild the World Trade Center.

The contract was awarded to HKS Inc., a Charlotte, N.C., based firm, the expansion of the so-called Expeditionary Legal Complex at the U.S. Navy base's Camp Justice should be complete by June 2019. No date has been set for the trial of suspected 9/11 plot mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four accused co-conspirators. Pretrial hearings resumed last week in the Gitmo court.

engineering, construction and management company, purchased URS in 2014. Another subsidiary, AECOM Tishman, built the original twin towers in 1973. AECOM's website notes that from 2011, the company has been "assisting with the \$1.15 billion efforts and managing more than 11 million square feet of new construction" at One World Trade Center.

The latest Guantanamo award is part of an ongoing building boom at the base that began in earnest during the Trump administration. The \$1.15 billion barracks for prison guards and other Detention Center staff, recently approved by Congress. Construction is already underway on Guantanamo's new, \$66 million K-12 school for the children of American sailors and other long-term base residents, now scheduled for completion in March 2019.

The war court project is to include a sixth holding cell for Guantanamo's maximum-security top-secret courtroom, an evidence locker and separate office space for the defense teams of the six former CIA operatives in capital proceedings. In addition to the 9/11 case, a Saudi, Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, has been charged with orchestrating al-Qaida's Oct. 12, 2000, bombing of the USS Cole warship off Yemen that killed 17 sailors. He could face execution if he's convicted.

Neither case has a trial date. But the chief defense counsel, Marine Brig. Gen. John Baker, in recent years has staffed each team with at least four attorneys, several paralegals, investigators, analysts, a security consultant and a translator, forcing them to share overlapping spaces.

Now, Pentagon announcements noted that the work includes surveillance-proof

workspaces for handling classified information, called a sensitive compartmented information facility, or SCIF, "ensuring each defense team is separated from one another along with appropriate security measures in accordance with Department of Defense minimum anti-terrorism for buildings standards."

The Pentagon invoked "emergency construction authority" and notified Congress in January that it planned to spend \$19 million on the project, more than the \$100 million in the complex's original 2007 \$12 million construction costs. It cited "national security" and called the additional construction a "strategically critical time-sensitive expansion project" necessary "to support the large number of personnel on the capital defense and prosecution teams through the trials to start on the USS Cole and 9/11 cases."

MILITARY

Beard: Heathen group says facial hair not required

FROM FRONT PAGE

A copy of the memo circulated on social media with the soldier's name redacted. Fort Leonard Wood spokeswoman Tiffany Wood confirmed the authenticity of the memo to Army Times.

The 2017 change to Army Regulation 670-1 was authorized by then-Army Secretary Eric Fanning mostly to accommodate observant Sikhs, whose religion requires adult males to wear beards, and conservative Muslim women who must wear head coverings under tenets of their faith.

"The soldier's brigade-level commander will approve a request for a religious accommodation ... unless the commander determines the request is not based on a sincerely held religious belief, or identifies a specific, concrete hazard that is not specifically addressed in this directive and that cannot be mitigated by reasonable measures," Fanning wrote.

However, the directive didn't stipulate which religions were covered by the exemptions. Nor did the directive differentiate between mandatory requirements — such as Sikh men wearing beards — and customary practices — such as wearing apparel in other faiths.

According to the Open Halls Project, an advocacy group for heathens serving in the military, the beard is a tradition, but not a requirement.

"There is no religious requirement for beards in Heathenry," said an April 2017 post on the Open Halls Project website. "Sikhs are allowed to wear beards and turbans because it actually is a religious requirement of their faith that they do so. Kesh, or 'uncut hair' is one of the five religious requirements of baptized Sikhs. We, as Heathens, have no such religious requirement with regards to hair."

Heathenry is a religious movement based on pre-Christian belief systems of Germanic peoples in early Medieval Europe. Their communities exist in the United States, Europe and Australia.

In March 2017, the Pentagon expanded its list of recognized faith groups to include among others atheists, agnostics, shamans, humanists and pagans.

The Hammer of Thor, the emblem of the Norse Pagan Faith, is authorized for military headstones.

Osprey makes emergency stop in Japan

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — No injuries or damage were reported after a U.S. military aircraft made an emergency landing Wednesday afternoon in Japan's Kagoshima prefecture — the third such incident in the past week, officials said.

The MV-22 Osprey from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma's 1st Marine Aircraft Wing made the precautionary landing at Amami Airport about 4:30 p.m. after a warning light came on, Japanese and Marine officials said.

The helicopter-plane hybrid was flying from Futenma to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni at the time of the incident, Marine spokeswoman Capt. Karoline Foote said in a statement to Stars and Stripes. It was joined on the ground by a second Osprey that had experienced no technical difficulties.

"The reason for the landing was a maintenance issue," Foote wrote.

"The cockpit functioned as designed in that the cockpit indicators informed the aircrew of the issue," she wrote. "The aircrew performed as trained; they took the appropriate action in accordance with standard operating procedures to safely land the aircraft at the closest airport."

Once on the ground, the crew investigated the malfunction and found there was no problem, a Kyushu Defense Bureau spokesman said. Both tilt-rotor aircraft left the airport about 5:50 p.m.

The Osprey that experienced the malfunction headed back to Futenma and landed at approximately 6:40 p.m., the Defense Bureau spokesman said. The other Osprey proceeded to Iwakuni as planned and landed about 7:20 p.m.

The emergency landing did not cause an interruption to airport operations on the island between Okinawa and mainland Japan.

The incident comes on the heels of an emergency landing Tuesday in Fukushima by an Iwakuni-based F-35B Lightning II fighter due to a cockpit warning, officials said.

A UH-1Y Venom from Futenma made a precautionary landing in Kumamoto on April 18 after a cockpit indication alerted pilots to a malfunction with the aircraft's oil-cooling system.

In January, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert Neller said 2018 was starting out better than last year in regard to safety despite three emergency landings that month that caused the Japanese to take a more active role in ensuring U.S. military aircraft safety.

On Jan. 23, an AH-1Z Viper helicopter made an emergency landing at a municipal helipad on Okinawa's Tonaki Island. Similar incidents happened on the southern island prefecture on Jan. 6 and Jan. 8.

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Army, German town strike deal on Panzer Range noise

By JOHN VANDIVER AND MARCUS KLOECKNER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. Special Operations Forces will scale back some of their high-intensity training here as part of a deal with local government officials to reduce the crackle of gunfire in an area where residents have grown frustrated with the noise.

U.S. Army officials met with federal officials and leaders from the suburban Stuttgart town of Boeblingen at the German Defense Ministry in Berlin on Wednesday in an effort to resolve a decadelong dispute.

"We understand the concerns of the communities surrounding our training facilities; after all, many Army families live in those communities as well," said Christian Marquardt, a spokesman for the 7th Army Training Command.

To mitigate training noise, the Army has agreed to move noisier training exercises conducted by special operations units at the Panzer Range Complex to the more isolated, rural garrison towns of Grafenwoehr or Baumholder, Marquardt said.

Some high-intensity drills will continue at the range, but the plan to reduce training was welcomed by local officials.

Boeblingen Lord Mayor Stefan Belz told Stars and Stripes that the meeting was very constructive.

"When I drove home from Berlin to Boeblingen, I had a good feeling, and I hope that the feeling will turn into enthusiasm in July," said Belz, referring to the time when the Army will present a detailed plan for the changes.

The officials also agreed to install new noise barriers to better soundproof the range, though a timeline for construction hasn't been finalized. Boeblingen has agreed to fund one-third of the project at a cost of about \$340,000. The Army will pay for the re-



JASON JOHNSTON/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

U.S. soldiers participate in a weapons training exercise at the Panzer Range Complex in Boeblingen, Germany, in 2016.

mainder, city officials said.

Marquardt said the Army has approved funding to mitigate more noise at Panzer, with a timeline to be determined.

In recent years, the Army has installed sound barriers designed to reduce sound and has restricted shooting on nights and week ends. But residents have continued to complain, straining the town's relationship with the Army.

The Stuttgart area is home to various elite military units that fall under the command of U.S. Special Operations Command Europe. While the range at Panzer is small and less intensively used than the facilities in Grafenwoehr, the sound of gunfire has been an irritant in some of the prosperous neighborhoods abutting the Boeblingen facility.

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Report: DOD probe doesn't single out any military personnel for punishment

FROM FRONT PAGE

orders for a separate mission into the concept of operations for the October mission to gain approval for the patrol that ended in the deaths of the four soldiers.

The report reveals that low-level commanders, eager to make their mark against local militants in Niger, "took liberties to get operations approved through the chain of command," the report reported.

The report did not single out any military personnel for punishment. However, the Army or U.S. Special Operations Command could seek to impose punitive measures if deemed necessary.

The Journal reported that Mattis provided the Special Operations Command and U.S. Africa Command with 10 "primary directives" to address problems that led to the ambush, giving the commands four

months to put better guidelines in place.

Killed in the ambush were Staff Sgt. Bryan C. Black, Staff Sgt. Dustin M. Wright, Staff Sgt. Jeremiah W. Johnson and Sgt. La David T. Johnson.

The troops were overrun and outgunned by about 50 fighters who claimed allegiance to Islamic State. The unit was on what the military has called a joint security patrol with Nigerian soldiers, but that mission changed as troops were redirected to search for a high-value target in the region.

There are about 800 U.S. troops in Niger, which is a hub for the U.S. military in western Africa. A \$110 million drone base is now under construction in the country.

While U.S. forces have been advising Nigerian troops for years, the mission has gradually expanded and intensified. After the ambush, it came to light that special

operators in Niger have come under fire multiple times during the past few years and even after the ambush.

Special operators involved in missions in Africa acknowledge that the threats in Niger and elsewhere on the continent don't pose an immediate threat to the U.S. But commanders argue that the mission is worth the risks because a major threat could develop in the region if left unchecked.

Col. Brad Moses, commander of the 3rd Special Operations Group, which leads missions in western Africa, was in command at the time of the ambush. While not commenting on the ambush itself, which was still under investigation, he said threats must be dealt with now.

"If there isn't something done to assist the countries across the Sahel region, it is going to become a very real threat," Moses

said in an interview last week. "Twenty years from now they will be an existential threat if we don't assist our partner forces now."

Still, Special Operations Command Africa already has made some changes to the operation in Niger, where joint patrols are now subjected to more scrutiny, military officials said. Commanders are placing more emphasis on command-and-control training, which is aimed at enabling Nigerian units to operate more effectively during their own operations.

Most family members of the fallen soldiers have been briefed on the investigation's findings. Once Congress has been briefed, a version of the report will be released publicly.

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MILITARY

Army eases curbs on privileges for recruits in MAVNI program

By DIANNA CAHN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — After more than a year of essential lockdown for noncitizen military recruits stuck in entry training programs, the Army has issued a policy memo loosening restrictions on privileges for these soldiers in recognition of their status, performance and conduct.

The memo was issued March 30 — just days after Stars and Stripes began asking questions about the soldiers in the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest, or MAVNI, program who have been held over at basic or initial job training since late 2016 when the Defense Department began requiring enhanced security vetting for them.

An Army spokesman said the memo “should leave no doubt” that these MAVNI holdovers should enjoy “full privileges.”

The policy change appears aimed at commanders, spelling out that these soldiers should be given privileges in keeping with permanent assignment to units. Brigade commanders of MAVNI holdovers are now “authorized to modify the privileges” for these soldiers at initial training units, according to the document.

“Privileges should be based on individual performance and conduct and must include privileges to permanently assigned soldiers,” said the “Change 2, Exception to Policy for MAVNI Trainees and Soldiers in Initial Entry Training” memo, signed by Maj. Gen. Malcolm Frost, commander of the Army’s Center for Initial Military Training. The Army released the memo to Stars and Stripes on April 20.

Asked whether they were seeing any improvements, some MAVNIs told Stars and Stripes that their situation remains the same. Others said they’d seen improvements based on the new policy.

Since 2009, more than 10,000 MAVNI soldiers were recruited because their backgrounds and talents, particularly their language or medical skills and their cultural knowledge, filled critical needs at the Army’s stateside entry they were offered promises of professional advancement and a fast track to citizenship. But growing national security concerns led the Defense Department in fall 2016 to institute enhanced security vetting, casting a shadow of suspicion onto the group and creating a backlog.

MAVNI soldiers who were recruited in the months leading up to that time were stuck waiting for the completion of security checks at whatever stage entry they’d reached. No MAVNI soldiers have been recruited since the vetting was introduced.

Shortly after the enhanced screenings were put into place, the Army issued a “stop move” order for training MAVNIs who’d been held over in early training

from traveling until their security investigations were complete, according to earlier Army memos. The memos outlined levels of privileges based on the training levels of the recruits and whether they were naturalized.

At installations across the country, “holdovers” told Stars and Stripes they were living under restrictive rules — many for more than a year at units that are supposed to host soldiers for just weeks or months. They were given few privileges and were granted limited movements even on post, and they were not able to work in their professional fields or to practice their skills.

A June 2017 memo clarified that non-naturalized MAVNI holdovers could be approved for leave within the U.S. based on the discretion of their commanders. But most MAVNIs contacted last month said they were stuck on post or were given limited allowances to leave with buddies. Some were required to have buddies even to walk across the installations. Traveling outside the country was prohibited except for extreme cases after a staff judge advocate review, the memos stated.

The policy memo released in March states that in December 2017, staff at the Center for Initial Military Training had “reevaluated the current MAVNI privilege policy” with input from the brigade commanders and the assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserves.

“This Change 2 is effective immediately and supersedes Change 1 dated 20 June 2017,” the document states.

In addition to easing restrictions on movement, the change also included allowing the consumption of alcohol. Under the prior memo, MAVNIs were prohibited from drinking alcohol regardless of age.

In earlier reporting, the Department of Defense declined to comment on the situation, citing ongoing litigation. There are at least two class-action lawsuits against the Defense Department filed by MAVNI Army reservists, but those lawsuits are limited in scope and do not include all MAVNIs, including those on active duty.

In supplying the most recent memo, Army Lt. Col. Jeffrey Pray, the public affairs officer for the Center for Initial Military Training, said he did not expect that the 2017 change to policy was meant to alleviate some of the hardship on the MAVNIs. He said the latest memo should fully clarify that.

Center for Initial Military Training policy “grants full privileges to MAVNI soldiers who are in a hold status in the Initial Military Training enterprise,” Pray wrote. “CIMT issued this policy in 2017 and recently updated it to leave no doubt that MAVNI Soldiers are authorized full privileges.”

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PHOTOS BY VIRGINIA MAY/AP

The NATO symbol is seen in front of the new NATO headquarters in Brussels on Thursday. Friday’s meeting is the last in the alliance’s old headquarters building.

Russia ties, Afghan peace hopes top NATO agenda

By LORNE COOK
Associated Press

BRUSSELS — NATO will hold its last major meeting in its old headquarters on Friday, with talks focused on strained ties with Russia, a fresh peace effort in Afghanistan and a new training mission for Iraq.

Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the allies are trying to arrange a meeting with Moscow’s envoy before President Donald Trump joins his NATO counterparts in Brussels for a summit in July.

The NATO-Russia Council has not convened this year and the March 4 poisoning of an ex-Russian spy in Britain plus the chemical attack in Syria that has been blamed on Moscow ally Syrian President Bashar Assad underline the need for more talks, he said.

“We continue to see attempts to intimidate and interfere in allied countries,” Stoltenberg told reporters Thursday on the eve of a meeting of NATO foreign ministers. “When tensions are high, it is even more important to talk with Russia.”

The ministers, holding their 70th and final meeting before moving across the road to NATO’s new, sprawling, \$1 billion premises, also will discuss Georgia and Ukraine’s aspirations to join the world’s biggest military alliance.

NATO’s top military officer and civilian official in Afghanistan will brief the ministers on peace efforts there as they try to bring Taliban fighters to the table to end the yearslong stalemate on the battlefield.



People walk through the Agora atrium at NATO headquarters in Brussels on Thursday.

The meeting comes amid a new wave of attacks across Afghanistan. An Islamic State suicide bomb attack Sunday on a voter registration center in Kabul, the capital, killed 57 people and wounded more than 100 others. In addition, at least 18 troops and police officers have been killed in Taliban attacks this week.

Still, NATO officials see an “unprecedented opportunity” in Afghan President Ashraf Ghani’s offer of unconditional peace talks accompanied by a cease-fire, the recognition of the Taliban as a political party and the release of some prisoners. They also say peace protests have been an encouraging sign.

“There are now spontaneous, not at all engineered by the government, peace rallies; people saying, ‘We want peace.’ We now are beginning to see that there can be something different in Af-

ghanistan,” U.S. NATO Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison told The Associated Press.

The ministers also are likely to agree on the details of NATO’s new training mission for the Iraqi armed forces. That effort involves “several hundred” NATO personnel who will help build up military academies with the aim of preventing the re-emergence of ISIS, according to Stoltenberg. On NATO expansion, Stoltenberg said the ministers will discuss the wishes of Macedonia and Georgia, noting that Macedonia could be given an invitation to join at the July summit if a dispute with Greece over the tiny former Yugoslav republic’s name is resolved.

Georgia is unlikely to become a NATO member as long as Russia holds sway over its breakaway provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

NATION

Senate panel advances bill protecting Mueller

BY MIKE DEBONIS
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Senate Judiciary Committee advanced legislation Thursday that would protect special counsel Robert Mueller from being fired by President Donald Trump after the panel's Republican chairman backed off changes that threatened bipartisan support for the bill.

A draft released by Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, on Wednesday night omitted language that would require the special counsel to notify congressional leaders "if there is any change made to the specific nature or scope" of the investigation.

With those changes, all of the Democrats on the committee joined Grassley and several Republican lawmakers to advance the bill on a 14-7 vote.

"It is possible the bill goes too far," Grassley said at a committee meeting Thursday. "But at the very least, if my amendment

is adopted, it will require the executive branch to give more information to Congress, and that will allow Congress to do its job more effectively and to safeguard the interests of American people."

With Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., dead set against bringing the measure to the Senate floor, House Republicans showing no appetite to take up legislation protecting Mueller, and Trump likely to veto any such bill even if it passed, there is little hope that the Senate legislation will be passed into law. But supporters of the legislation say that its mere consideration in committee will send an important message to Trump that firing Mueller or his overseers at the Justice Department would spark a fierce backlash on Capitol Hill.

The legislation, the Special Counsel Independence and Integrity Act, was introduced this month by two Republicans, Sens. Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina, and Thom Tillis, of North Carolina, and two Demo-

crats, Sens. Cory Booker, of New Jersey, and Christopher Coons, of Delaware.

Every member of the committee who spoke Thursday said it would be unwise — or worse — for Trump to move against Mueller. One senator who opposed the bill, Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., said it would be "politically suicidal."

Two Republican senators, John Cornyn, of Texas, and Orrin Hatch, of Utah, offered an amendment that would offer nonbinding support for Mueller while also making clear that the Constitution prevents Congress from reining in the president's prosecutorial powers.

The amendment was defeated on a 15-to-6 vote.

Democrats had raised alarms over a proposed draft Grassley circulated this week, which would have required the attorney general to inform House and Senate Judiciary Committee leaders whenever the special counsel expanded or changed

the scope of his or her investigation.

Grassley and the authors of the bill struck a compromise this week, however, to strip that notification requirement from the chairman's amendment. In the final version, lawmakers will be notified only when the special counsel commences and finishes an investigation or, in the event a special counsel is terminated, 30 days before the special counsel is given notice.

Lawmakers also stripped language from the amendment in advance of Thursday's markup that would have required the special counsel to detail reasons that lawmakers could not publicize the information they receive.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., the top Democrat on the panel, offered praise for the new draft, saying it was "the result of hours of bipartisan negotiations."

"I know that sometimes it's hard to compromise, but you did that, and this is better because of that," she told Grassley.

Macron rejects Trump's 'America First' rhetoric in speech to Congress

BY JOSH LEDERMAN
AND LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — French President Emmanuel Macron drew sharp contrasts with President Donald Trump's worldview Wednesday, laying out a vision of global leadership that rejects "the illusion of nationalism" in a candid counterweight to Trump's appeals to put "America first."

In the spotlight of a speech to the U.S. Congress, Macron was courteous but firm, deferential but resolute as he traced the lines of profound division between himself and Trump on key world issues: climate change, trade and the Iran nuclear deal.

A day after the French leader had put on a show of brotherly affection for Trump at the White House, his speech prize engagement over isolationism reinforced Macron's emerging role as a defender of the liberal world order.

"We can choose isolationism, withdrawal and nationalism. This is an option. It can be tempting to us as a temporary remedy to our fears," Macron said. "But closing the door to the world will not stop the evolution of the world. It will not cause but inflame the fears of our citizens."

Issuing a bleak warning, he urged against letting "the rampaging winds of extreme nationalism shake a world full of hopes for greater prosperity."

It was a marked shift from the simpatico Macron of only a day earlier during his state visit at the White House. In his first year as France's president, Macron has carefully cultivated as close a relationship to Trump as any world leader can boast. But addressing a joint meeting of Congress, Macron confronted his differences with Trump head-on.

Macron made clear France will not follow Trump's lead on Iran.

"We signed [the nuclear deal] at the initiative of the United States. We signed it, both the United States and France," Macron said. "That is why we cannot say we should get rid of it like that."

Macron later told French reporters he has no "inside information" on Trump's decision on the Iran deal but noted it's clear the U.S. president "is not very much eager to defend it."

Macron saved some of his most pointed comments during the speech on Trump administration policy on climate change, implicitly lamenting the president's moves to withdraw from the global emissions pact reached in Paris. Macron said humans are "killing our planet" and added "Let us face it: There is no Planet B."

"On this issue, it may happen we have disagreements between the United States and France. It may happen, like in all families," Macron said. "But that's for me a short-term disagreement."

It was an allusion not to an impending Trump about-face, but to the prospect of America choosing a different path under a successor, whoever that may prove to be. Asked by French reporters about his comments later during a visit to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, Macron said with a smile that he doesn't expect Trump to rejoin the Paris accord but does expect that America will.

Macron's hourlong speech to Congress, delivered in English, provoked obvious delight from congressional Democrats, who erupted repeatedly in cheers and standing ovations for the visiting Frenchman — a contrast to the mostly silent reaction from Republicans in the House chamber.

At home, Macron does not enjoy the same level of applause or enthusiasm. A centrist in France, he's currently criticized more from the left than the right, notably for ending France's famed worker protection.



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVIAS/AP

French President Emmanuel Macron gestures as he is introduced before speaking to a joint meeting of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington on Wednesday.

It wasn't all criticism from Macron. He sought to showcase the historic bond between the U.S. and France, touting the two allies' "constant attachment to freedom and democracy." Yet he also mentioned "fake news," a point of

contention between Trump and others, and warned that lies disseminated online are threatening freedoms worldwide.

He recounted trans-Atlantic links from the earliest days of the U.S. Macron talked about a meet-

ing between Ben Franklin and the French philosopher Voltaire, "kissing each other's cheeks."

In an apparent reference to his affectionate rapport with Trump this week, Macron mused, "It can remind you of something."

Merkel gets much smaller platform on US visit

BY FRANK JORDANS
Associated Press

BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel is heading to Washington with the same message French President Emmanuel Macron delivered only days earlier: that America and Europe need to bury the hatchet on key issues, from global trade to international security.

Yet despite Macron's and Merkel's efforts to portray a united European front, the optics of their visits couldn't be more different.

While President Donald Trump received Macron and his wife for a glitzy three-day state visit this week, Merkel gets a 20-minute private chat Friday in the Oval Office followed by a working lunch.

Past encounters suggest Merkel and Trump won't be putting on a show of mutual affection for the White House cameras.

That should be fine with Merkel, who has little to gain back home by being overly friendly with Trump, according to German political analyst Jan Techau, a senior fellow at the think tank The

German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Anti-American sentiment has been growing again in Germany since Trump's election, with mainstream media regularly portraying the U.S. president as a threat to the world.

Two deadlines loom ahead of Merkel's trip: The first is Trump's demand for an overhaul by May 12 of the Iran nuclear deal, which Germany, like France, worked hard to secure and believes should remain.

Berlin has indicated it's prepared to consider add-ons that would crack down on Tehran's ballistic missile program and curb Iranian efforts to strengthen its role in the Middle East.

The second deadline concerns the extension of new U.S. tariffs on foreign-made steel and aluminum.

Merkel's aides sought to play down expectations her U.S. visit will result in a breakthrough on trade. A senior government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the German government expects the exemption Trump granted the European Union from new U.S. import tariffs on steel and aluminum to expire on May 1.

NATION

Ex-policeman charged with Calif. serial killings

By DON THOMPSON
and BRIAN MELLEY
Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A man once sworn to protect the public from crime was accused Wednesday of living a double life terrorizing suburban neighborhoods at night, becoming one of California's most feared serial killers and rapists in the 1970s and '80s before leaving a cold trail that baffled investigators.

Former police officer Joseph James DeAngelo, 72, was arrested at his home Tuesday after DNA linked him to crimes attributed to the so-called Golden State Killer. He initially was charged with eight counts of murder and could face dozens of more charges, authorities said.

The culprit also known as the East Area Rapist, among other names, is suspected of at least 12 slayings and 50 rapes in 10 counties across California. The armed and masked prowler sneaked in through windows at night and surprised sleeping victims who ranged in age from 13 to 41.

When encountering a couple, he was known to tie up the man and pile dishes on his back. He threatened to kill both victims if he heard plates crash to the floor while he raped the woman. He then ransacked the house, taking souvenirs, notably coins and jewelry, before fleeing on foot or bicycle.

Despite an outpouring of thousands of tips over the years, DeAngelo's name had not been on the radar of law enforcement before last week, Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert said.

"We knew we were looking for a needle in a haystack, but we also knew that needle was there," she said. "It was right here in Sacramento."

A break in the case and the arrest came together in "light speed" during the past six days, Schubert said, though authorities refused to reveal what led to DeAngelo.

Sacramento Sheriff Scott Jones said detectives with "dogged determination" were able to get a sample of DNA from something DeAngelo discarded, though he wouldn't say what the item was. The genetic material was not a match, but there were enough similarities for investigators to return for more and they said they were able to get a conclusive match.

After watching DeAngelo for several days, deputies took him by surprise Tuesday.

"It looked as though he might have been searching his mind to execute a particular plan he may have had," but never had time to act, Jones said.

DeAngelo was arrested on suspicion of committing double killings in Sacramento and Ventura counties and later charged with four counts of murder in Orange County, officials said.

Ventura County District Attorney Gregory Totten said the before prosecutors decide whether to seek the death penalty, there



RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

Sacramento County sheriff's deputies leave the Citrus Heights, Calif., home of Joseph James DeAngelo on Wednesday.



SACRAMENTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE/AP

DeAngelo is suspected of committing at least 12 homicides and 45 rapes throughout California in the 1970s and '80s.

will be a "solemn and formal death review process that typically takes many months before a decision is made."

DeAngelo, who served in the Navy, was a police officer in Exeter, in the San Joaquin Valley, from 1973 to 1976, at a time a burglar known as the Visalia Ransacker was active, Jones said.

He transferred to the force in Auburn in the Sierra foothills near where he grew up outside Sacramento. About 50 crimes, including two killings, were attributed to the East Area Rapist during the three years DeAngelo worked in Auburn, but Jones said it wasn't clear if any were committed while on duty.

DeAngelo was fired from the Auburn department in 1979 after being arrested for stealing a can of dog repellent and a hammer from a drug store, according to Auburn Journal articles from the time. He was convicted of the theft and fined \$100.

Ten slayings occurred after he was fired, and all took place in



FBI/AP

A photo released by the FBI shows East Area Rapist Ski Masks in Sacramento, Calif.

Southern California.

DeAngelo worked for 27 years in a distribution center for Save Mart Supermarkets in Roseville, a Sacramento-area suburb. He retired last year, said Victoria Castro, spokeswoman for The Save Mart Companies.

"None of his actions in the workplace would have led us to suspect any connection to crimes being attributed to him," Castro said in a statement, adding that the company was working with investigators.

Although it's unusual for serial killers to stop, Jones said they have no reason to think DeAngelo continued to commit crimes after 1986, when the last rape and killing occurred in Orange County.

"We have no indication of any crimes with a similar or at least

a close enough link to his MO and other things that he's done in the past to link him to anything from '86 on," Jones said. "We just have nothing at this point."

Jones said he always thought the rapist was alive but might be in prison.

For the prosecutors and investigators, the arrest not only marked a significant professional achievement but also a personal one that had touched their formative years and early careers.

Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley was a college student volunteering at a rape crisis center and "sat with survivors who had been assaulted by this guy."

The wave of horrifying crimes had brought an end to a more innocent era in the Sacramento

suburbs when children rode bicycles to school, played outside until dark and people didn't lock their doors, Schubert said.

"It all changed," said Schubert, who was 12 at the time. "For anyone that lived here in this community, in Sacramento, the memories are very vivid. You can ask anyone who grew up here. Everyone has a story."

Totten said he was a young law clerk in the office during the investigation into the 1980 slayings of Lyman and Charlene Smith that "struck terror in the hearts of Ventura residents."

"We had no idea this killer was connected to so many other crimes," Totten said.

In 1999, Orange County sheriff's homicide detectives were able to use DNA to link the Irvine slaying of Keith and Patricia Harrington to nine other slayings in Orange, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. The genetic evidence was later used to connect the same suspect to dozens of rapes in Northern California.

Harrington's brother, Bruce, helped bankroll a successful 2004 ballot initiative campaign to take DNA from all convicted felons and some arrestees.

"To the victims, sleep better tonight; he isn't coming through the window," Bruce Harrington said at the news conference announcing the arrest.

Jane Carson-Sandler was one of the first victims when she was sexually assaulted in 1976 in her home in Citrus Heights, the same community where DeAngelo was arrested at home.

She said she received an email Wednesday from a retired detective who worked on the case telling her they identified the rapist and he's in custody.

"I have just been overjoyed, ecstatic. It's an emotional roller-coaster right now," Carson-Sandler, who now lives near Hilton Head Island, S.C., told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. "I feel like I'm in the middle of a dream and I'm going to wake up and it's not going to be true. It's just so nice to have closure and to know he's in jail."

FBI agents and other investigators were gathering evidence at DeAngelo's neatly kept home on Wednesday. Jones said they were looking for mementos that may have been stolen from victims.

Neighbors said DeAngelo took meticulous care of his house, which was always perfectly painted and his lawn manicured. But he was known for an explosive temper and loud cursing.

Kevin Tapia said when he was a teenager, DeAngelo falsely accused him of throwing things over their shared fence, prompting a heated exchange between DeAngelo and his father.

"No one thinks they live next door to a serial killer," Tapia said. "But at the same time I'm just like, he was a weird guy. He kept to himself. When you start to think about it, you're like, I could see him doing something like that, but I would never suspect it."

NATION

Massive teacher marches set in Arizona, Colorado

By MELISSA DANIELS
Associated Press

PHOENIX — A wave of red-clad teachers will crash upon the Arizona state Capitol on Thursday for an unprecedented job action that will close schools for a majority of the state's public school students, part of an educator uprising that's also bubbled up in Colorado.

Around 30,000 to 50,000 teachers and their supporters are expected to march through Phoenix to rally at the Arizona state Capitol to demand a 20 percent raise for teachers, about \$1 billion to return school funding to pre-Great Recession levels and increased pay for support staff, among other things.

In Colorado, more than 10,000 teachers are expected to demonstrate in Denver as part of a burgeoning teacher uprising. About half of the student population will have shuttered schools as a result, with teachers using personal leave time to take off.

The walkouts are the climax of an uprising that began weeks ago with the grass-roots #RedforEd movement that spread from West Virginia, Oklahoma and Kentucky.

Colorado lawmakers from both parties have agreed to give schools their largest budget increase since the Great Recession. But teachers say the state has a long way to go to make up for ground lost during the recession and before that due to the state's strict tax and spending limits.

Arizona Education Association President Joe Thomas said that Thursday's march to the Capitol is necessary after attempts at outreach have been ignored. There's no end date for the walkout, and he said educators may have to consider a ballot initiative for education funding if lawmakers do not come up with a plan on their own.

"How it ends is up to the governor and up to those legislative leaders," Thomas said. "If they're courageous, if they have the political capital to come down and



MATT YORK/AP

Highland Arts Elementary School kindergarten teacher Melissa Perez participates in a final walk-in Wednesday in Mesa, Ariz. Communities and school districts are preparing for a historic statewide teacher walkout on Thursday.

speak with us, we all get a win."

Republican Gov. Doug Ducey has laid out a plan for a 20 percent teacher pay raise by 2020, but organizers of the #RedforEd movement say his plan relies on rosy revenue projections and doesn't

address the other issues.

Districts around the state have said they will close as a result of the walkout. More than 840,000 Arizona students are expected to be out of school on Thursday, according to an analysis from the

Arizona Republic that tallied up at least 100 school districts and charter schools are closing.

The state Department of Education said the state has more than 200 districts and more than 1.1 million schoolchildren.

MGM set to open new Mass. casino in August

By PHILIP MARCELO
Associated Press

BOSTON — The fate of Wynn's glitzy Boston-area casino may still be up in the air, but rival MGM says it is on track to open Massachusetts' first Las Vegas-style casino resort sooner than expected.

MGM Resorts International President Bill Hornbuckle said in a Wednesday interview with The Associated Press that the company is targeting Aug. 24 as the new opening date for the \$960 million hotel and casino complex it has been building in downtown Springfield.

The company previously envisioned the casino opening sometime in September, but relatively mild winters and steady progress on a nearby highway project affecting the casino have allowed construction to move slightly faster than anticipated, he said.

Hornbuckle, like other company officials in recent weeks, declined to address reports the company has been quietly negotiating with Wynn Resorts to take over its more than \$2.5 billion project on the Everett waterfront, which is slated to open sometime



DON TREEGER, THE (SPRINGFIELD, MASS.) REPUBLICAN/AP

Construction on the MGM Casino in downtown Springfield, Mass., shown underway last week, is on track for an August opening.

next year.

"We have a longstanding policy that we're not going to speak on rumors," he said. "Whatever happens in Boston is up to the gaming commission, and that story is yet to be told."

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission has been investigating allegations of sexual misconduct by Wynn Resorts founder Steve Wynn and what the company's board might have known about them. The results of the investigation might affect the company's license to operate in Massachusetts.

But taking over Wynn's development in the more desirable

Boston market would require MGM to find a new owner for its casino in the western part of the state. Massachusetts law prevents casino operators from holding more than one state gambling license.

Gambling analysts have suggested the Indian tribes that operate Connecticut's Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods resorts would be the most obvious suitors if the Springfield property became available, though a spokesman for the tribes shot down the idea on Wednesday.

"Speculation about us buying Springfield is rumor mill trash," said Andrew Doba.

Senate panel report cites risks to migrant children

Associated Press

The U.S. government risks placing migrant children in the custody of human traffickers because federal agencies have delayed crucial reforms needed to keep the children safe, according to the findings of a Senate subcommittee obtained by The Associated Press.

Federal officials came under fire two years ago for rolling back child welfare policies meant to protect unaccompanied minors fleeing violence in Central America, and lawmakers said Thursday that the agencies had yet to take full responsibility for the children's care in the United States.

Since the dramatic surge of border crossings in fall 2013, the federal government has placed more than 180,000 unaccompanied minors with parents or other adult sponsors in communities nationwide, where they are expected to attend school while they seek legal status in immigration court.

An AP investigation found in 2016 that more than two dozen unaccompanied children had been sent to homes across the country where they were sexually assaulted, starved or forced to work for little or no pay. At the time, many adult sponsors didn't undergo

thorough background checks. Government officials rarely visited homes and in some cases had no idea that sponsors had taken in several unrelated children, a possible sign of human trafficking.

Since then, the Health and Human Services Department has used its limited funding to boost outreach to at-risk children deemed to need extra protection, and last year offered post-placement services to about one-third of unaccompanied minors, according to the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

Advocates say it is hard to gauge the total number of minors who may have been exposed to dangerous conditions, in part because some of the migrants designated for follow-up disappear before social workers reach them, and sponsors can refuse a house call.

"HHS has an obligation to better track these kids and ensure they show up to their court hearings because the potential for trafficking and abuse remains an issue," said Republican Sen. Rob Portman, chair of the subcommittee, which will hold a follow-up hearing Thursday.

HHS declined to respond to AP questions about the subcommittee's findings.

NATION

Cosby guilty of '04 aggravated indecent assault

By MICHAEL R. SISAK
AND CLAUDIA LAUER
Associated Press

NORRISTOWN, Pa. — Bill Cosby was convicted Thursday of drugging and molesting a woman in the first big celebrity trial of the #MeToo era, completing the spectacular late-life downfall of a comedian who broke racial barriers in Hollywood on his way to TV superstardom as his way to Dad.

Cosby, 80, could end up spending his final years in prison after a jury concluded he sexually violated Temple University employee Andrea Constand at his suburban Philadelphia home in 2004. He claimed the encounter was consensual.

The verdict came after a two-week trial in which prosecutors put five other women on the stand who testified that Cosby, married for 54 years, drugged and violated them too. One of those women asked him through her tears, "You remember, don't you, Nani?"

The panel of seven men and five women reached a verdict after deliberating 14 hours over two days, vindicating prosecutors' decision to retry Cosby after his first trial ended with a hung jury less than a year ago.

Cosby could get up to 10 years in prison on each of the three counts of aggravated indecent assault. He is likely to get less than

that under state sentencing guidelines, but given his age, even a modest term could mean he will die behind bars.

Constand, 45, a former Temple women's basketball administrator, told jurors that Cosby knocked her out with three blue pills he called "your friends" and then penetrated her with his fingers as she lay immobilized, unable to resist or say no.

It was the only criminal case to arise from a barrage of allegations from more than 60 women who said the former TV star drugged and molested them over a span of five decades.

"The time for the defendant to escape justice is over," prosecutor Stewart Ryan said in his closing argument. "It's finally time for the defendant to dine on the banquet of his own consequences." Another prosecutor, Kristen Feden, said Cosby was "nothing like the image that he played on TV" as sweater-wearing, wisdom-dispensing father of five Dr. Cliff Huxtable on "The Cosby Show."

Cosby's retrial took place against the backdrop of #MeToo, the movement against sexual misconduct that has taken down powerful men in rapid succession, among them Harvey Weinstein, Matt Lauer, Kevin Spacey and Sen. Al Franken.

The jurors all indicated they were aware of #MeToo but said before the trial they could remain impartial. Cosby's lawyers



MARK MAKELA, POOL PHOTO/AP

Actor and comedian Bill Cosby reacts while being notified a verdict was in his sexual assault retrial, Thursday in Norristown, Pa. A jury convicted him of three counts of aggravated indecent assault.

slammed #MeToo, calling Cosby its victim and likening it to a witch hunt or a lynching.

After failing to win a conviction last year, prosecutors had more courtroom weapons at their disposal for the retrial. The other accusers' testimony helped move the case beyond a he-said, she-said, allowing prosecutors to argue that Cosby was a menace to women long before he met Constand. Only one other accuser was permitted to testify at Cosby's first trial.

Cosby's new defense team, led by Michael Jackson lawyer Tom Mesereau, launched a highly aggressive attack on Constand and the other women.

Their star witness, a longtime Temple employee, testified that Constand once spoke of setting up a prominent person and suing. Constand sued Cosby after prosecutors initially declined to file charges, settling with him for nearly \$3.4 million over a decade

ago.

"You're dealing with a pathological liar," Mesereau told the jury.

His colleague on the defense team, Kathleen Bliss, derided the other accusers as home-wreckers and suggested they made up their stories in a bid for money and fame.

But Cosby himself had long ago confirmed scandalous revelations about drugs and extramarital sex. In a deposition he gave over a decade ago as part of Constand's lawsuit, Cosby acknowledged he had obtained quaaludes to give to women he wanted to have sex with, "the same as a person would say, 'Have a drink.'" The sedative was a popular party drug before the U.S. banned it more than 30 years ago.

Cosby also acknowledged giving pills to Constand before their sexual encounter. But he identified them as the over-the-counter cold and allergy medicine Benad-

ryl and insisted they were meant to help her relax.

The entertainer broke racial barriers as the first black actor to star in a network show, "I Spy," in the 1960s. He created the top-ranked "Cosby Show" two decades later. He also found success with his "Fat Albert" animated TV show and served as pitchman for Jell-O pudding.

Later in his career, he attracted controversy for lecturing about social dysfunction in poor black neighborhoods, railing against young people stealing things and wearing baggy pants.

It was Cosby's reputation as a public moralist that prompted a federal judge, acting in response to a request from The Associated Press, to unseal portions of the deposition. Its release helped destroy the "Cosby Show" star's career and good-guy image. It also prompted authorities to reopen the criminal investigation, and he was charged in late 2015.

Facing Congress, EPA administrator doesn't appear ready to apologize

By MATTHEW DALY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Even with Republican lawmakers' patience running short, President Donald Trump's environmental chief appears to be in no mood to apologize as he faces Congress for the first time since a deluge of ethics allegations has consumed his tenure.

Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt will make no reference to ethics issues or complaints about lavish spending on travel and security that have dogged him in recent months, according to an opening statement for an appearance before a House energy panel Thursday.

Pruitt is likely to face sharp questions about his spending decisions, and his answers could prove crucial in determining whether he stays atop EPA, lawmakers say.

Republicans largely have stood

behind Pruitt, saying they are encouraged by his efforts to ease federal regulations on manufacturing, mining and other industries. But as allegations against Pruitt keep surfacing, even his allies increasingly are raising doubts about his job security.

Sens. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., and John Thune, R-S.D., said Pruitt faces "serious questions" about his use of taxpayer money.

"I want to make sure taxpayers are getting value for their dollars, make sure money is being spent appropriately. So there continue to be serious questions," said Barrasso, chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

While Trump previously has backed Pruitt, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders appeared noncommittal Wednesday. "We're evaluating these concerns, and we expect the EPA administrator to answer

for them," she said.

The shift represented growing frustration that Pruitt's problems were becoming the Republican Party's problems during a campaign season in which the GOP already is facing headwinds. Pruitt's spending pattern is out of step both with Trump's promise to bring corporate efficiency and penny-pinching to government and with the rules many lawmakers must follow. While some have praised Pruitt's refusal to back down, casting him as a fighter against a biased liberal media, others said it was time for him to explain himself.

"Frankly, I think Scott Pruitt's done a great job of reinstating sanity in the rulemaking and the regulating process at EPA," said House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, R-La.

However, Thune, the third-ranking Republican in the Senate, said, "Obviously, Scott Pruitt



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVALS/AP

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt arrives for a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee hearing Thursday in Washington.

has got some serious questions to answer."

Those questions include Pruitt's use of shell companies in Oklahoma real estate deals and spending taxpayer money for such personal perks as first-class airline seats. The Associated Press and other news media reported this week that the EPA's

security chief worked on the side as a private investigator for the owner of a tabloid news company with close ties to Trump.

Pruitt also is likely to face questions about reports that he lived in a bargain-priced condominium linked to a lobbyist whose firm's clients have business before the EPA.

NATION

Ore. pot: Much data, but few to analyze, check it

By ANDREW SELSKY
Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. — To the beat of electronic dance music, men and women inside a slate-gray building harvested marijuana plants festooned with radio-frequency identification tags. In another room, an employee entered the tag numbers into a government database.

The cannabis tracking system used by Avitas, a marijuana company with a production facility in Salem, is the backbone of Oregon's regulatory system to ensure businesses with marijuana licenses obey the rules and don't divert their product into the black market.

A huge amount of data is entered into the system by Oregon's 1,800 licensees every day, a reality that means the state has a tremendous amount of information at its fingertips. But the reality also is the state doesn't have the manpower to monitor all that data.

The marijuana regulatory agency — the Oregon Liquor Control Commission — has only one marijuana data analyst and not enough inspectors to randomly inspect grow sites and processing facilities to ensure the accuracy of the data they are providing.

A recent state audit concluded the lack of trained inspectors and "reliability issues" with self-reported data hurt the commission's monitoring of Oregon's adult-use marijuana program.

"I think this is a fundamentally sound system," the commission's executive director, Steve Marks, told The Associated Press. But he said: "It's not being used to its capabilities. We don't have the workforce there."

Oregon's experience is reflective of one of the significant challenges in the expanding legal U.S. marijuana industry: the ability of governments to keep track of their own markets.

Washington, the first state to broadly legalize marijuana in 2012, recently switched tracking

contractors after it outgrew the first system, and quickly ran into major technical problems. Colorado has reported no significant technical issues but has only five people on the data analysis staff to help with investigations and look for potential violators.

Last year, Nevada switched tracking companies after its first system crashed. California became the world's largest legal marijuana market on Jan. 1 without the promised vast computer system for tracking. It won't be available for months.

The Oregon tracking system was created by Franwell, a Florida-based technology company that has contracts in a handful of states, including California. Licensees log entries into the system as seeds sprout into plants and the plants are harvested, processed, sent to stores and sold.

The flood of data is checked by the single full-time marijuana data analyst, with occasional help. Five more will be hired soon, but they'll have their hands full as an estimated 2,000 medical marijuana growers start entering the tracking system on July 1.

According to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, a recent inventory of adult-use marijuana in the state stood at more than 1 million pounds. That's roughly 4 ounces for each of the state's 4.1 million residents.

Avitas general manager Joe Bergen said the pot businesses are inputting a "ridiculous" amount of information into the tracking system. He said 10 percent of Avitas' staff at the Salem facility is dedicated to rules compliance — tagging plants and finished products, tracking the inventory and filling out official shipping manifests.

"It's important to do it, but it's burdensome for a small business," Bergen said.

The data have been useful in confirming wrongdoing in roughly 50 investigations, though less than half of them were triggered by the data, commission spokesman Rob Pettinger said.

On a recent morning, Cecilia

to escape war. The family's Hazara ethnic group had long faced violence and persecution in Quetta.

"We were not safe over there, so we applied for refugee status," said Muhammad Amiri.

Muhammad, his mother and three sisters resettled in the U.S. with the help of the Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota.

The family plans to host their charity



PHOTOS BY ANDREW SELSKY/AP

The cannabis tracking system used by Avitas, a marijuana company with a production facility in Salem, Ore., helps ensure businesses don't divert cannabis into the black market.



Anthony Uribes processes a marijuana plant with an attached tracking label at Avitas' facility.

Espinosa sat at a table inside Avitas' production facility, staring at a desktop computer. A small wheel spun on the screen for a couple of minutes as she waited for the web application to open so she could update information about the hundreds of plants growing in the 12,000-square-foot building.

"We call it the 'spinning wheel of death,'" Espinosa said with a laugh. "It's tedious."

Across the room, Bergen placed marijuana products into a bin for delivery to Mr. Nice Guy, a marijuana shop in Salem. He then checked the history of one of the cartridges of marijuana oil. The

powerful oil was produced from Strawberry Fields, a marijuana strain that the pot review site Leafly says is "tranquilizing."

Bergen clicked on a column and added filters until he found a date — Nov. 14, 2016. That was when one of the plants whose THC was a component of the oil was cloned, when an Avitas grower snipped a sprig from a mother plant and stuck it into spongy material soaked in nutrients.

"It's the first batch we ever produced here," Bergen said, grinning and pointing at the screen. "That's the beginning; that's the origin story!"

Cannabis producers and regulators compare the tracking system to filing income taxes. They operate to a large extent on good faith, but when an auditor or inspector comes there better be evidence to back the numbers.

However, the chances of a "compliance inspector" showing up at a site is low. The Oregon commission employs only 19, with four more to be added soon.

They don't have time to randomly check grow sites and compare amounts of marijuana they see with the data. Instead, inspectors are largely tied up investigating complaints — for example, on someone carrying out a function beyond the scope of a license, or harvesters lacking the required permit, commission officials said.

Companies that have gone the legal route — paying for licenses, security and other systems to meet the requirements — say regulators should focus on those who remain outside the legal system. They note the illegal producers are unfair competition, without the large overhead.

"Really, there is no incentive for us to do anything but stay in the recreational market," said Bergen, whose company invested millions in the Salem facility. "Why would we have gone to all this trouble just to lose our license from doing something stupid like selling on the black market?"

but they're like family to us. The community helped us, so we just want to give back to them (and) say thank you."

Resettlement Coordinator Turdukan Tostokova secured funding for the meal through Thrivent Financial's Thrivent Action Team, which awards grants to help groups with unmet needs in their communities.

Tostokova said she hopes to make the event annual or semi-annual.

Afghan refugees plan to host thank-you dinner for Bismarck

Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. — A family from Afghanistan is cooking a community meal for Bismarck residents to thank those who helped them resettle in North Dakota two years ago.

The Amiri family moved to the United States in 2016. The Bismarck Tribune reported. They're from Afghanistan, but had been living in Quetta, Pakistan, since 2004

dinner for the organization at the United Church of Christ on May 4. They plan to make a traditional Afghan meal that will include kabuli palau, a dish with rice with carrots and raisin, and korma, a chicken or vegetable plate with sauce.

"When we got here, we didn't have anybody," said Muhammad Amiri, 22. "We didn't have friends, family, nothing. But (the community) welcomed us. Right now, we have families here — they're friends,

NATION

Pool: Younger Americans less apt to use unique passwords

By FRANK BAJAK
Associated Press

The number of online accounts compromised by hackers is now in the trillions — enough, perhaps, to make even technophobes think hard about the security of their passwords. Indeed, many are — especially older Americans, a new survey shows.

Start with the now-familiar advice to avoid reusing the same password across important accounts such as email, banking and social media. A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that 41 percent of Americans say they use unique passwords for most or all online services. Just a third of adults younger than 45 do so, however, compared with about half their elders.

Anyone who reuses a password increases their chances of falling victim to data theft — a serious risk given such major breaches as the hacks that compromised 3 billion Yahoo accounts in 2013. Hackers often test big batches of

passwords stolen in one breach against other potentially sensitive accounts, a practice called “credential stuffing.”

Older Americans are also more likely to commit their passwords to paper, the poll found. Fifty-six percent of people 60 and older do so, compared with 20 percent of the younger-than-30 crowd. If kept away from prying eyes, written passwords are generally considered a good idea.

“I don’t use the same password for any two sites,” said Stephanie Harris, 61, a retired warehouse manager in Sacramento, Calif. She shops and banks on the internet and chooses her passwords from “things I like to do, things I like to eat. Never anybody’s name because I’m not into that. If I see something really cool, then I’ll make it a password.”

Harris said she changes her passwords often and uses between eight and 12 characters, sometimes including numbers and symbols.

The AP-NORC poll found 32 percent of 1,047 respondents use

a single password less than the time. That was a bit less than the 39 percent who told the Pew Research Center last year that most of their passwords were the same or similar.

Inadequate attention to password security has helped fuel an epidemic of cybercrime. A Verizon report published last year on hacking-related data breaches said 81 percent involved weak, reused or stolen credentials — up from 63 percent the previous year.

It doesn’t help that the experts themselves haven’t been consistent with their advice.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology revised its best password practices last year. The new guidelines run counter to the information-security gospel that persists in much of the corporate world — namely, that passwords should change frequently and must contain both uppercase and lowercase letters with required symbols and numbers.

NIST said such requirements often yield less secure passwords.



ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

Older Americans worry more about online security, according to an Associated Press-NORC poll..

The author of the original recommendations now regrets them.

Password managers — programs that can store your passwords securely, can generate new, random passwords and often even can fill them in on login pages — are also gradually becoming more popular. Thirteen percent of respondents to the AP-NORC poll said they use them.

Mike Rodriguez, 50, of Port St. Lucie, Fla., is not one of them.

“I don’t trust them,” said the maintenance engineer, who said he has only four online accounts he uses regularly, including Facebook and banking. Rodriguez said he never saves credit card or other financial information to any

online business.

Rodriguez was one of 18 percent of respondents who said they use unique passwords for all their online accounts. He uses a simple method for creating them, which he didn’t appear to mind sharing with a reporter.

Suffice it to say it involves demographic details of various people he’s known.

The AP-NORC poll was conducted April 11-16 using a sample drawn from NORC’s probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4 percentage points

Lawmakers eye allowing Medicare to cover methadone treatment

By CARLA K. JOHNSON
Associated Press

One in three older Americans with Medicare drug coverage is prescribed opioid painkillers, but for those who develop dangerous addictions, there is one treatment Medicare won’t cover: methadone.

Methadone is the oldest, and experts say, the most effective of the three approved medications used to treat opioid addiction. It eases cravings without an intense high, allowing patients to work with counselors to rebuild their lives.

Federal money is flowing to states to open new methadone clinics through the 21st Century Cures Act, but despite the nation’s deepening opioid crisis, the Medicare drug program for the elderly covers methadone only when prescribed for pain.

Joseph Purvis, a former user of heroin and prescription painkillers, said he went into a depressive talspin because he initially feared he might have to stop methadone treatment when he went on Medicare at 65.

“I was terrified that I might have to leave the program. There’s no way I wanted to go back to addiction on the streets,” said Purvis, 66, of Gaitersburg, Md.

Methadone doesn’t meet the requirement of Medicare’s Part D drug program because it can’t be dispensed in a retail pharmacy.

Instead, in the highly regulated methadone system, patients first are assessed by doctors, then show up daily at federally certified methadone clinics to take their doses of the pink liquid. Or, like Purvis in Maryland, they prove through repeated urine screens that they have earned the right to weekly take-home doses.

In Congress, a Senate panel looking for ways to counter the opioid epidemic is considering allowing Medicare to cover methadone treatment. Legislation has been introduced in the House, and a White



KEVIN D. LILES/AP

The CEO of a methadone clinic holds a 35 mg liquid dose of methadone in Rossville, Ga. The drug, which has proven effective in treating opioid addiction, isn’t covered for that use by Medicare.

House commission on the opioid epidemic also recommended the change.

The epidemic is “affecting all populations, including our seniors,” said Rep. George Holding, R-N.C., a sponsor of the House bill. “Medicare beneficiaries have among the highest and fastest-growing rates of opioid-use disorder, but they don’t currently have coverage for the most effective treatment.”

An estimated 300,000 Medicare patients have been diagnosed with opioid addiction, and health officials estimate nearly 90,000 are at high risk for opioid misuse or overdose.

Buprenorphine, a more expensive and slightly less regulated treatment drug, is covered by Medicare but few doctors

who accept new Medicare patients have obtained federal waivers to prescribe it. A recent study of Medicare claims found prescriptions for buprenorphine for only 81,000 patients.

More evidence that the crisis affects seniors: Opioid overdoses killed 1,354 Americans 65 and older in 2016, about 3 percent of the 42,000 opioid overdoses that year.

Medicare’s policy means clinics often scramble to keep older patients in treatment if they’ve had commercial insurance that covered their care before turning 65, said counselor Angela Caldwell, of Montgomery Recovery Services in Rockville, Md.

A national organization for methadone clinics says the clinics now have 25,000 Medicare beneficiaries who are either

paying out of pocket (about \$80 per week) or getting care through state-run Medicaid or grant programs.

Mark Parrino, president of the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence, thinks more people would seek methadone treatment if Medicare covered it.

Many older patients rely on surprisingly high doses of opioids for pain relief, which can turn into addiction, said Dr. Anna Lembke, an addiction specialist at Stanford University School of Medicine.

One of her addiction patients, a woman in her mid-70s, was referred to her because her daily dose of opioids had climbed over the years to many times more potent than that of a typical heroin user, Lembke said.

“She’s had a gradual development of tolerance over many decades and now is on an astronomical dose,” Lembke said. “If you took any random person and gave them [that much], they would die.”

Lembke said she normally wouldn’t consider methadone for this patient because of the stigma associated with the clinics. But Medicare coverage might make them more acceptable, Lembke said, and her patient “might actually do better with methadone.”

In Maryland, Purvis remained on methadone treatment because his income is low enough that he qualifies for the state-federal Medicaid insurance coverage for the poor and the disabled. Medicaid covers methadone treatment in Maryland and about 35 other states.

Purvis, who used heroin for more than a decade in his youth, later took opioids prescribed by specialists for back pain. After his pain doctor’s office was shut down for overprescribing, he started methadone treatment.

“Some people think of methadone as a crutch for addiction, but it’s not,” Purvis said. “It’s a tool that allows people to live a somewhat normal life.”

WORLD

Central American caravan reaches southern US border

By ELLIOT SPAGAT
Associated Press

TIJUANA, Mexico — About 130 Central Americans, mostly women and children, have arrived at the U.S. border with Mexico in a "caravan" of asylum-seeking immigrants that has drawn the fury of President Donald Trump.

Two busloads arrived Tuesday in the Mexican border city of Tijuana at two migrant shelters just steps from one of the most fortified stretches of border separating the U.S. from Mexico. They joined another 50 or so who arrived in Tijuana over the last week or two.

Four more busloads of about 200 Central Americans — mostly women and children but including some men — were expected to arrive in Tijuana on Wednesday, said Alex Mendenhall, project coordinator for Pueblos Sin Fronteras, which is organizing the effort.

U.S. lawyers planned to lead clinics later this week on U.S. asylum law to tell the immigrants what to expect when they seek

asylum. The first groups plan to try to enter the U.S. on Sunday at San Diego's border crossing.

The caravans have been a fairly common tactic for years among advocacy groups to bring attention to Central American citizens seeking asylum in the U.S. to escape political persecution or criminal threats from gangs.

The latest one drew more attention because Trump tweeted about it from almost the moment it began March 25 in the Mexican city of Tapachula, near the Guatemalan border.

While it slowly traveled across Mexico, Trump used it as an example to try to win more support for his planned border wall — even though the asylum-seekers plan to turn themselves in to border inspectors.

This caravan's numbers pale compared with the roughly 200,000 people who were arrested at the border in Texas' Rio Grande Valley during the spring of 2014 during the administration of President Barack Obama.

Many of them were Central



HANS-MAXIMILIAN MUSEL/AP

A Central American migrant mother holding her baby stands by the luggage area after arriving in Tijuana, Mexico, on Wednesday.

American women and children.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has space to hold about 300 people at the crossing, said Pete Flores, director of the agency's San Diego field office. It turns them over to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to determine if they should be held long-term if they can be released while their cases are pending.

If asylum-seekers make it through initial screenings with asylum officers by establishing "credible fear" of being returned to their homelands, they are allowed in and face what can be lengthy proceedings before U.S. immigration judges.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, in a message apparently aimed at asylum-seek-

ers, said Wednesday that anyone who makes false claims to immigration authorities is subject to criminal prosecution. The same goes for anyone who assists or coaches immigrants on making false claims.

Nielsen's threat is consistent with the administration's narrative of widespread "asylum fraud" and claims that asylum-seekers are coached on what to tell U.S. authorities.

The secretary also said asylum-seekers in the caravan should seek protection in the first safe country they reach, including Mexico.

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions said he may assign additional immigration judges to handle caravan cases.

Sub inventor gets life for murder of journalist

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Danish submarine inventor Peter Madsen was found guilty Wednesday of torturing and murdering Swedish reporter Kim Wall before dismembering her body during a private submarine trip. He was sentenced to life in prison.

Copenhagen City Court Judge Anette Burkke said she and two jurors unanimously decided Wall's death was a murder, finding Madsen also guilty of sexual assault and the defilement of a corpse.

During the 12 days of the trial that began March 8, the court heard testimony that Madsen, 47, lured Wall, 30, to his hand-built submarine with the promise of an interview she had been trying to get for months.

Wall, a freelance journalist, was last seen Aug. 10 waving to her boyfriend and other friends ashore as the submarine sailed off into the Baltic.

Her dismembered torso was found days later at sea off Copenhagen, and other body parts were found in plastic bags in October.

In Denmark, life equates to 16 years, which can be extended.

Poland blasts congressman's claim that law glorifies Nazism

By VANESSA GERA
Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Poland's government is criticizing the claim of a U.S. congressman that a new Polish law glorifies Nazi collaborators and denies the Holocaust.

The charge was made by Ro Khanna, a Democrat from California, one of two congressmen leading a bipartisan effort urging the State Department to pressure Poland and Ukraine to combat state-sponsored anti-Semitism.

"Our government should be concerned with the resurgence of anti-Semitism in Ukraine and Poland. Both countries recently passed laws glorifying Nazi collaborators and denying the Holocaust," Khanna wrote Wednesday.

In the Polish case, Khanna referred to a new law that makes it a crime to blame Poland for the Holocaust crimes committed by Nazi Germany. The law has sparked criticism in the U.S. and particularly in Israel, where some fear its aim is to quash discussions about Polish anti-Semitic vio-

lence during the German occupation in World War II.

Amid Israeli criticism, some Polish officials and commentators have made comments considered anti-Semitic.

Andrzej Pawluszek, an adviser to Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, told The Associated Press on Thursday that Khanna's words were "irresponsible and shocking."

Poland's deputy foreign minister, Bartosz Cichocki, retorted Wednesday on Twitter: "Sir, I would appreciate if you indicated

a single law passed in my homeland Poland (recently or not), which glorifies Nazi collaborators and/or denies Holocaust."

In a separate post, he added, "Equally, I would love to learn what exactly your government did to combat (the) Holocaust after being requested to do so by the Polish government-in-exile."

During Germany's occupation of Poland during the war, the Polish government-in-exile struggled to warn the world of the mass killing of the Jews — a message that was largely ignored.

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WORLD



PAULA VAZQUEZ/AP

Dolores Leis, whose resemblance to President Donald Trump has brought her fame on social media, stands in a field on her farm in Galicia, in northern Spain.

For Trump look-alike, crops more a worry than social media fame

By ARITZ PARRA
Associated Press

MADRID — A woman in Spain has found unexpected fame on social media after many found she bore a striking resemblance to President Donald Trump.

A journalist reporting on farming in northwestern Spain posted on Instagram a picture of Dolores Leis dressed in farm clothing with a hoe over her shoulder, prompting thousands of responses.

Leis, 64, has since been asked to comment on pressing U.S. policy and international issues — though she has shown more concern for a moth plague threatening her potato crops.

"I say that it must be because of the color of the hair," Leis told the *La Voz de Galicia* newspaper Tuesday.

She is different than Trump on one issue though — she doesn't use a mobile phone and has little interest in online chatter.

Leis, who appears standing in the middle of her farming plot,

her frowning face looking away from the camera and blond hair held by a diadem, has many fans now.

"Can we replace Trump with this hard working lady?" one responder on Instagram asked.

Others, who called Leis "Trump's Galician sister," made an online call to research the president's family roots in the Costa da Morte, or Death Coast, the rocky shore in northwestern Spain with a long history of shipwrecks.

A Galician native who has lived in the same town since she married her husband four decades ago, Leis works at home and at her farm, where the reporter found her last week, planting potatoes.

Leis told the newspaper she has not felt overwhelmed by sudden fame because without a smartphone the online buzz is easy to ignore.

"I look at everything that my daughters show me, but it never stirs my curiosity to have one (phone)," she said.

Germans don skullcaps to protest anti-Semitism

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER
Associated Press

BERLIN — Germans of various faiths followed Jewish skullcaps and took to the streets Wednesday in several cities to protest an anti-Semitic attack in Berlin and to express fears about growing hatred of Jews in the country.

The kippa protest was triggered by the daytime assault last week of two young men wearing skullcaps in an upscale neighborhood in the German capital. The attack, in which a 19-year-old Syrian asylum-seeker is a suspect, drew outrage in Germany and sharp condemnation by Chancellor Angela Merkel.

It is the latest of several anti-Semitic incidents that have many Jews wondering about their safety in Germany, which has tried to atone for Nazis' killing of 6 million European Jews in the Holocaust more than 70 years ago.

The rising tensions have come at a time when Germany is grap-

pling with an influx of more than 1 million mostly Muslim migrants, along with the rise of a nationalist party, the Alternative for Germany, which was elected to Parliament last year. Its leaders are known for their openly anti-Muslim stance, but their anti-Semitism is less apparent.

Across Europe, anti-Semitism has been on the rise in recent years, and thousands of Jews — mostly from France — have moved to Israel.

More than 2,000 people — Jews, Christians, Muslims and atheists — put on kippas in a show of solidarity in Berlin.

The yarmulkes were of all varieties — silky and knitted, leathery, embroidered and patterned. Holding them so the wind wouldn't blow them away, both men and women cheered when Berlin Mayor Michael Mueller told them: "Today, we all wear kippa. Today, Berlin is wearing kippa."

Jewish community leaders said it was the biggest such display in

public since before World War II.

Reinhard Borgmann, 65, a Jew who lost several great-uncles in the Holocaust and whose mother survived only because she hid from the Nazis, said he was pleased that dozens of organizations had turned out to support the demonstration.

"As Jews, we want to be able to move freely, whether with kippa or without," Borgmann said. "We want to be able to practice religion in peace and not be discriminated against and not live in fear. And this event tonight is a sign and an important one."

Three people who protested separately against anti-Semitism in the Arab immigrant neighborhood of Neukölln ended their demonstration earlier after one person took away their Israeli flag, police said.

Beyond that, hundreds of people also rallied in Cologne, Erfurt, Magdeburg and Potsdam.

Pakistan bars US diplomat involved in fatal accident from leaving the country

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — An American diplomat who struck a Pakistani motorcyclist in a fatal road accident earlier this month has been barred from leaving the country, pending a civil court case, Pakistani officials said Wednesday.

The U.S. military attaché, Col. Joseph Emanuel Hall, is accused of running a red light and killing Ateeq Baig on April 7.

Hall enjoys diplomatic immunity so he cannot be arrested or

tried. But the two Pakistani officials said Baig's family has filed a civil case against him, hoping for compensation. They said Hall's name was added to a "blacklist" by the government this month.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters.

The U.S. Embassy said it was in touch with Pakistan about the travel restrictions, without elaborating. Officials refused to

disclose Hall's location for safety and security reasons. However, Pakistani official say he has not left the country.

The embassy previously has expressed condolences to Baig's family, which this month rallied in Islamabad demanding justice.

Baig's father, Mohammad Idrees, has said he is willing to discuss pardoning Hall. Under Islamic law, the family of a victim can pardon a killer in the name of God or after getting compensation.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman uses someone else's tainted urine

OH ST. CLAIRSVILLE — An Ohio woman might want to ask some questions if she tries to borrow someone's urine again to pass a drug test. Kiana Wallace, 24, was sentenced to 18 months in prison Monday in eastern Ohio's Belmont County after submitting a borrowed urine sample that tested positive for drugs. Wallace pleaded guilty earlier this month to attempted tampering with evidence. Judge Frank Fregiato called the failed urine swap "bizarre" and told Wallace he wouldn't allow her to make a mockery of the drug and alcohol testing system.

Police: Man exposed himself in school lot

MA NORTHBOROUGH — Police have arrested a Massachusetts man they alleged ran around a middle school parking lot wearing nothing but a thong and twice exposed himself to a woman walking her dog. Zachary Teplansky, of Northborough, was released on \$1,000 bail after pleading not guilty Monday to charges including open and gross lewdness. Police arrested Teplansky, 21, after a woman called Sunday to say she was walking near the school when she encountered a man running laps in the parking lot. She told police the man was wearing just a thong, which he pulled down twice.

State researchers tag alligators with GPS

SC HILTON HEAD ISLAND — An old children's story speaks of mice putting a bell on a cat's tail. Researchers in South Carolina are tagging alligators' tails. And necks.

The Island Packet of Hilton Head reported researchers from Clemson University, the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources and a local wildlife group hope to track alligators as they become more active this spring.

They caught three Tuesday, tagging them and fitting GPS tracking devices on the two biggest. The battery-powered devices are supposed to record the location of the alligator every three hours for the next two years.

Dog bites woman during argument on subway

NY NEW YORK — New York City police are searching for the owner of a dog that attacked a woman during an argument on the subway. Police said the attack happened last week on the No. 4 train in Manhattan. Witnesses said the woman asked the owner to move his dog when it bumped her on a seat. Onlookers said the woman pushed the dog off the seat repeatedly before the man hit her. Witnesses said the dog bit the woman's foot when she hit the man back.

THE CENSUS

12 The approximate number of hours a young black bear spent roaming around a Florida family's home. Tracy Russell said the bear had raided the garbage can at their Holly home and approached the front porch while standing on its hind legs. A Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission officer used an agency-issued shotgun that fires bean-bag rounds to scare the bear away.



PHOTOS BY KELLY TONE, CHICAGO ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY/AP

Heavy lifting

Above: Layla, a 7½-year-old, 2,300-pound eastern black rhinoceros, is wheeled into Brookfield Zoo's Pachyderm House, where she received what is believed to be the first portable CT scan performed on the species in Brookfield, Ill. The scan provided diagnostic results that will help determine the best course of action in treating an obstruction in Layla's nasal passageway. Right: Dr. Sathya Chinnadurai, senior staff veterinarian for the Chicago Zoological Society, monitors Layla as she receives the scan.



Video shows the woman struggle as the dog clamps down on the surrounding crowd yells. The dog released the woman and was taken off the train by its owner.

Viral video shows deer ice-surfing to safety

ME ALLAGASH — A video of a deer surfing an ice flow down river before nimbly jumping to safety is causing a sensation. The young deer went viral on social media Monday as it floated downriver and avoided an icy death near the tiny town of Allagash. More than 70,000 people had watched the video by Tuesday morning. The Bangor Daily News reported that people gathered on a riverbank and cheered on the deer as it sought safety. Another resident took a video of the deer's escape to dry ground, which happened after the animal ice-surfed for at least 2 miles.

Frost museum reopening under new ownership

VT SHAFTSBURY — The Robert Frost Stone House Museum is ready to reopen under new ownership — Bennington College. The Friends of Robert Frost announced last September that it was donating the house, seven acres of property and two barns to the college. It's due to open for the season on May 3. The Bennington Banner reported that Frost purchased the house in 1920 and lived there until 1929.

Young giraffe makes brief escape at zoo

IN FORT WAYNE — Workers at an Indiana zoo needed a couple of hours to corral a young giraffe that escaped from her enclosure. The 7-month-old female got

loose Monday from the African Journey exhibit at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo. Zoo spokeswoman Bonnie Kemp said the giraffe, Thabisa, never left the property. Staffers trapped the giraffe in a fenced parking lot in a nonpublic area of the zoo.

Fireworks set off in race to steal Rolex

FL SUNRISE — Police allege was part of a race to set off fireworks inside a Florida outlet mall on New Year's Eve to steal a nearly \$17,000 Rolex watch. Kevin Triana, 22, was arrested in Greenville, S.C., on Sunday. Orange County sheriff's deputies said they're still looking for the man who set off the fireworks that allowed Triana to escape with the pricey watch. Surveillance video shows frantic shoppers and employees running for cover and hiding in stock rooms at Sawgrass Mills. The video shows Triana trying

on the Rolex, then running off still wearing it after the explosions start.

Man wanted in ear-biting incident is arrested

CT STAMFORD — A Connecticut man police say was wanted for biting off another person's earlobe and swallowing it during a drunken brawl in 2013 was arrested again for what officials describe as another alcohol-fueled fight. Stamford police said they responded to reports of a disturbance at an apartment early Sunday morning. Police told the Stamford Advocate a victim said Lajuj Emiliano and a 17-year-old boy attacked him after they ran out of beer. Officers later realized Emiliano, 33, was also Emilio Mendoza, wanted for skipping a court date to face an assault charge in the ear-biting incident. From wire reports

INDEPENDENT NEWS FOR THE U.S. MILITARY COMMUNITY

Whenever They Fight and Wherever They Live

The first Stars and Stripes was printed during the Civil War, when a band of Union soldiers published a handful of editions.

During World War I, Stars and Stripes reappeared in Paris on February 8, 1918, to serve the doughboys of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), by order of General of the Armies John J. Pershing. An all-military staff produced it weekly until the war's end.

A second renaissance began on April 18, 1942, when a small group of servicemen began publishing a four-page weekly Stars and Stripes in London. They sold each copy for "tuppence" (about 5 cents) and in no time doubled their page count to eight pages, printing daily instead of weekly.

The first World War II edition of Stars and Stripes featured an interview with Gen. George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff. Marshall quoted Gen. Pershing, World War I Commander of the AEF, who described Stripes as a major factor in sustaining morale. Stars and Stripes later found a champion and protector in Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander and later president of the United States.

Eisenhower enforced a hands-off policy in regard to Stars and Stripes that continues to the present day.

Operations expanded, following GIs to the battlefield to bring them the news. During the war, Stars and Stripes published over 30

separate editions, running up to 24 pages per issue.

At one time, Stars and Stripes had some 25 printing locations in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific. The Pacific edition was launched a week after VE day (Victory in Europe, May 8, 1945).

The war ended—but Stars and Stripes kept going. Its reporters and photographers continued to join American troops in the field, throughout the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, during the 1990s Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and in Bosnia and Kosovo.

From the 2003 outset of Operation Enduring Freedom, Stars and Stripes was there to report first-hand. The war in Afghanistan continues to receive steady coverage. And during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Stripes reporters embedded with military units in Kuwait and Iraq, as well as on Navy ships in the region.

Stars and Stripes today is a multimedia news organization. The majority of Stars and Stripes unique reporting efforts is read now in digital form, either online at stripes.com or via mobile offerings for iPhone, Android and iPad, in over 200 countries around the world.

The print newspaper is still available for servicemembers, government civilians and their families in

Europe, the Middle East and the Pacific—and in contingency areas. Washington, D.C., hosts the Central office, where daily editions are transmitted to printers in Afghanistan, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Djibouti, as well as in Germany, Italy, UK, Japan, and South Korea. Stars and Stripes also publishes several weeklies (Stripes Guam, Japan, Korea and Okinawa), designed to serve the

needs of their respective military communities.

A U.S. edition comprised exclusively of Stars and Stripes reports from around the world now serves stateside forces and veterans. The U.S. edition is published in partnership with commercial newspaper publishers who serve communities with large military populations.



STARS AND STRIPES RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

2015 Columbia Journalism School Dart Awards

Feature Story Reporting
(Daily Circulation 1,500,000)
Finalist: Martin Kuz: "Army Sgt. Isaac Sims left the war in Iraq, but it didn't leave him"

2014 Sigma Delta Chi Award – Feature Story Reporting

(Daily Circulation 1,500,000)
Recipient: Martin Kuz: "Death shapes life for teens that prepare bodies of fallen troops for final flight home"

2014 VFW News Media Award

For outstanding contribution to a better understanding of our American way of life and its institutions and interests by honest and forthright reporting.

2013 Military Reporters and Editors Awards

Notable Narrative Winner
Recipient: Laura Rauch

2013 Best American Newspaper Narrative Writing Contest

Notable Narrative Winner
Recipient: Martin Kuz: "Soldiers Recount Attack"

2013 National Headline Awards – Second Place: News Series (Forever After: A Warrior Wounded; A Family Challenged)

2011 Military Photographer of the Year – Honorable Mention
Recipient: Joshua DeMott

2011 Sigma Delta Chi Award – Breaking News Photography

(Newspaper Circulation 100,001+ or Affiliated Website/National Magazine) Recipient: Laura Rauch: "For those I love I will sacrifice"

2011 John Reagan "Tex" McCrary Award for Excellence in Journalism – Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation

2010 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Overseas coverage (< 100,000 circulation)

Recipient: Jon Barloff

2010 National Headline Awards – First Place: Public Service (Forcing Change) – Third Place: News Series (Coming Home: The Men of Triple Deuce)

2009 George Polk Awards in Journalism – George Polk Award for Military Reporting
Recipients: Charles Reed, Leo Shane III and Kevin Baron

2007 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Overseas coverage (< 100,000 circulation)
Recipient: Monte Morin

2006 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Overseas coverage (< 100,000 circulation)

Recipients: Monte Morin, Joe Giordano; Honorable mention: Nancy Montgomery
Photography: Fred Zimmerman

2005 Military Reporters and Editors Awards – Overseas coverage (< 100,000 circulation)

Recipient: Steve Lewis
Photography: Terry Boyd

2004 American Legion Excellence in Journalism Award – Ground Truth Series

2003 Scripps Howard Foundation National Journalism Award – First Amendment, Finalist

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Amid data scandal, Facebook sees revenue soar

By DAVID PIERSON
Los Angeles Times

Facebook Inc. continued to add users and saw revenue soar in the first quarter despite facing its worst crisis in company history over the mishandling of personal data belonging to millions of unsuspecting users.

The social network blew away Wall Street estimates by reporting a nearly 50 percent increase in revenue from the same period a year ago, to \$11.97 billion. Analysts had expected a 40 percent

increase to \$11.4 billion.

Earnings per share reached \$1.69, well above estimates of \$1.35. Monthly active users totaled 2.2 billion and daily active users 1.45 billion, both meeting analysts' expectations of a 13 percent increase from a year ago.

Despite the strong results, Facebook shares closed unmoved Wednesday.

The results marked the company's first quarterly earnings report since the Cambridge Analytica scandal erupted nearly six weeks ago.

The report was being closely watched for any signs of harm to Facebook's bottom line amid a cascading controversy that has galvanized attention over privacy and sparked a backlash against behemoth tech companies.

Facebook said as many as 87 million users could have unwittingly had their data obtained by political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica through a third-party app.

The revelation set off a firestorm that resulted in testimony by Zuckerberg before lawmakers

on Capitol Hill and an investigation by the Federal Trade Commission to determine if the company breached a 2011 consent decree over privacy.

Zuckerberg has repeatedly apologized for the breach, which triggered a sell-off in shares. Despite gains Wednesday, Facebook's stock has slid 17 percent since an all-time high in February.

A boycott campaign popularized by the hashtag #DeleteFacebook stoked fears of an exodus that could lead to advertisers. At least three companies — Sonos, Com-

merzbank and Mozilla — pulled their advertising from the platform in response to the scandal.

Wall Street analysts were dubious the company would pay a heavy price, and its first-quarter results suggest they were right.

Analysts estimated that Facebook would report 1.45 billion daily active users the first three months of this year, compared with 1.4 billion the previous quarter. Analysts also expected monthly active users to rise to 2.19 billion, up from 2.13 billion in the fourth quarter.

Nintendo names new president as its profits make turnaround

By YURI KAGEYAMA
Associated Press

TOKYO — Nintendo Co. reported solid sales and profit for the fiscal fourth quarter, powered by brisk demand for its Switch machines. The company also announced Thursday that it will be getting a new president.

Shuntaro Furukawa, director at The Pokemon Company, will replace Tatsumi Kimishima subject to approval at a general shareholders meeting in June.

Kimishima, 68, will retire and become an adviser to the company. Furukawa, 46, a graduate of Tokyo's prestigious Waseda University, joined Nintendo in 1994 and has helped

oversee global marketing.

Kyoto-based Nintendo has had its ups and downs over the years, but it has recently appeared to be on a turnaround track.

January-March profit for the Japanese maker of Super Mario and Pokemon games totaled 4.4 billion yen (\$40 million), reversing a 394 million yen loss racked up the previous year.

Nintendo is getting a lift from strong sales of the Switch, a hybrid game machine that works as both a console and a tablet.

Quarterly sales rose 12 percent year-on-year to \$1.8 billion.

More than 15 million Switch consoles were

sold during the fiscal year through March, according to Nintendo.

It's expecting to sell another 20 million during the fiscal year through March next year.

The company said sales of the 3DS handheld also kept up even after Switch went on sale a year ago.

Nintendo, which brought the world the Famicom game machine in the 1980s, is projecting profit for the fiscal year through March 2019 to grow 18 percent to \$1.5 billion.

For the fiscal year through March, Nintendo recorded a profit of \$1.3 billion, better than what it had expected.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (April 27)	\$1.2511
Dollar buys (April 27)	69.7993
British pound (April 27)	\$1.43
Japanese yen (April 27)	106.00
South Korean won (April 27)	1,052.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.3980
Canada (Dollar)	1.2856
China (Yuan)	6.5341
Denmark (Krone)	6.1201
Egypt (Pound)	17.6835
Euro	\$1.2171/0.8216
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8465
Hungary (Forint)	257.07
Israel (Shekel)	3.5746
Japan (Yen)	109.19
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3006
Norway (Krone)	7.9536
Philippines (Peso)	51.92
Poland (Zloty)	3.47
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7511
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3264
South Korea (Won)	1,077.18
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8944
Thailand (Baht)	31.578
Turkey (New Lira)	0.0650

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.75
Discount rate	2.25
Federal funds market rate	0.69
3-month bill	1.82
30-year bond	3.18

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$3.087	\$3.364	\$3.599	\$3.422
Change in price	+5.1 cents	+5.0 cents	+5.4 cents	+2.9 cents
Netherlands	--	\$3.718	\$3.861	\$3.804
Change in price	--	-3.6 cents	-3.6 cents	-3.6 cents
U.K.	--	\$3.309	\$3.544	\$3.367
Change in price	--	+5.0 cents	+5.4 cents	+2.9 cents
Azores	--	--	\$3.542	--
Change in price	--	--	+5.4 cents	--
Belgium	--	\$3.100	\$3.334	\$3.194
Change in price	--	No change	No change	No change
Turkey	--	--	\$3.420	\$3.153*
Change in price	--	--	+5.4 cents	+0.1 cents
Italy	\$3.974	No change	--	\$4.012
Change in price	No change	--	--	No change

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	--	\$3.339	--	\$3.169
Change in price	--	+5.0 cents	--	+3.0 cents
Okunawa	\$2.829	--	--	\$3.169
Change in price	+5.0 cents	--	--	+3.0 cents
South Korea	\$2.869	\$3.139	\$3.379	\$3.199
Change in price	+5.0 cents	+5.0 cents	+3.0 cents	--
Guam	\$2.859**	\$3.089	\$3.379	--
Change in price	+5.0 cents	+5.0 cents	+3.0 cents	--

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of April 28-May 4

MARKET WATCH

April 25, 2018

Dow Jones Industrials	59.70
	24,083.83
Nasdaq composite	-3.62
	7,003.74
Standard & Poor's 500	4.84
	2,639.40
Russell 2000	-2.81
	1,550.47

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

WEEKEND



Brothers
Osborne

Music, Page 36

SHOW OF FORCE

Marvel caps successful decade
with new 'Avengers: Infinity War'

Feature, Page 24
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WEEKEND: GADGETS & CHARTS



istock photo

Many drone operators use the devices in national parks, where they're illegal, to capture stunning video of otherwise inaccessible places.

Illegal drone use a frustration in some national parks in US

By ZACH URRNESS
Starline Journal

The videos are nothing short of spectacular. In one film posted to YouTube, two skiers are captured shredding down the rim of Crater Lake, filmed from an eye in the sky that takes in the full sweep of the United States' deepest lake.

In another, the footage showcases the cliff-walled circle of the lake from directly overhead, providing a bird's-eye view into the belly of the exploded volcano.

Both videos are unique, have been watched thousands of times and were filmed illegally.

The use of drones is outlawed at national parks nationwide — and has been since 2014. But the dropping price and improving technology of what are officially known as unmanned aircraft have meant an increase in the number buzzing Oregon's only national park.

"It's becoming quite a problem," Crater Lake superintendent Craig Ackerman said. "People are using them without concern for the impacts, and we intend to start stepping up enforcement of the rule."

Park officials say they see drones flying over the lake on a regular basis, especially in the summer. Ackerman said they've even buzzed boat tours on the lake.

Marsha McCabe, chief of interpretation and cultural resources at the park, said she comes across

people getting ready to launch drones on a regular basis.

"I would say it's a growing problem," she said. "There might be some folks who just don't know, but we make it pretty clear in the park newspaper you get upon entering the park, on our website and in signs around the lake."

Violation of the ban is a misdemeanor with the maximum penalty of six months in jail and a \$5,000 fine.

When park officials spot a drone in flight, they call law enforcement rangers, who try to figure out who's controlling them.

Whether they allow people to get off with a warning depends on the situation, McCabe said.

"People come here for quiet and solitude, and if there's a drone buzzing overhead all of a sudden, that's pretty intrusive," McCabe said. "We're also home to several endangered species and drone noise has been shown to disrupt wildlife."

"There are plenty of public lands where they are allowed, but at national parks, our mission is different."

Where people are allowed to fly drones varies. They're allowed in most national forests, but are prohibited in federally-designated wilderness areas and some wildlife refuges.

The National Park Service may use drones for search and rescue operations, fire operations, scientific study and aerial photography.

GADGET WATCH

Treat your pearly whites to a sonic clean

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

I've been brushing my teeth recently with the Swedish-made Foreo ISSA 2, which the company touts as the world's first silicone sonic toothbrush.

It takes only an hour to charge, which is said to last for up to 365 uses before another USB charge is needed. Obviously, I haven't used it that long, but after a few weeks, it's running fine.

I never knew specifications on electric toothbrushes, until now. The ISSA 2 supplies your teeth with 11,000 high-intensity pulsations per minute, incorporating T-Sonic technology to create micro-sweeps to clean teeth and gums effectively. That helps resist the buildup of bacteria for up to 10,000 fewer bacteria than nylon-bristled toothbrushes, according to Foreo.

The soft and flexible quick-drying bristles are made with medical-grade silicone, which separates from the ergonomic handle easily for cleaning.

Other features include a timer, 16 variable speeds and the head, which should last for six months.

The incredible battery life is not necessary for home use, but makes it perfect for traveling. Power is controlled by a recessed button, which really can't be activated accidentally, minimizing the risk of embarrassment from a suddenly vibrating suitcase at the airport.

Online: foreo.com; \$169, replacement brushes \$24.90. Available in blue, mint, pink and black

Cable and satellite boxes often keep us from rearranging a room and in particular the location of a TV since it has to be connected to the box.

The Blackweb Wireless HD Video kit is a different type of cable cutter to help in situations like this, or just to control cable clutter by sending uncompressed HD signals to your HDTV or projector.

Setting it up is pretty straightforward and virtually plug-and-play with the quick start guide. The initial setup has you connecting your media sources (cable, satellite, DVD, gaming, etc.) to the wireless sender. Up to three different HDMI sources can be connected.

When everything is connected, the signal goes from the sender to the wireless receiver (6.5-by-5.5-by-1.3 inches each), which is connected to the TV.

An HD signal up to 1080P is supported up to 125 feet away, and will work through walls, TV cabinets, etc.

I didn't try this with a projector, but using it with one would be a great benefit,

The Foreo ISSA 2 comes in various colors. The silicone sonic toothbrush claims to outperform nylon-bristled toothbrushes.

Foreo/TNS



ON THE COVER: The Avengers assemble to battle Thanos (not pictured) in "Avengers: Infinity War."

Marvel Studios

ITUNES MUSIC

The top 10 songs on iTunes for the week ending April 19:

1. "Cry Pretty," Carrie Underwood
2. "Nice For What," Drake
3. "Meant to Be," Bebe Rexha & Florida Georgia Line
4. "Chun-Li," Nicki Minaj
5. "You Make It Easy," Jason Aldean
6. "God's Plan," Drake
7. "Barbie Tingz," Nicki Minaj
8. "Whatever It Takes," Imagine Dragons
9. "The Middle," Zedd, Maren Morris & Grey
10. "Get Along," Kenny Chesney

— Compiled by AP

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The top 10 songs on Spotify for the week ending April 24:

1. "Nice For What," Drake
2. "No Tears Left to Cry," Ariana Grande
3. "God's Plan," Drake
4. "One Kiss" (with Dua Lipa), Calvin Harris
5. "Psycho" (feat. Ty Dolla Sign), Post Malone
6. "I Like It," Cardi B
7. "Call Out My Name," The Weeknd
8. "ROD," Marshmello
9. "XO," J. Cole
10. "X," Nicky Jam

— Compiled by Stars and Stripes

ITUNES MOVIES

The top 10 movies on iTunes for the week ending April 22:

1. "The Post"
2. "The Greatest Showman"
3. "The Commuter"
4. "Molly's Game"
5. "Justice League"
6. "Baby Driver"
7. "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle"
8. "Peter Rabbit"
9. "Hostiles"
10. "Super Troopers"



— Compiled by AP

BOOKS

The top 10 books on Apple's iBooks charts for the week ending April 22:

1. "A Higher Loyalty," James Comey
2. "The Fallen," David Baldacci
3. "The Silent Corner," Dean Koontz
4. "Astrophysics for People in a Hurry," Neil de Grasse Tyson
5. "Come As You Are," Lauren Blakely
6. "After Anna," Lisa Scottoline
7. "Then She Was Gone," Lisa Jewell
8. "I've Got My Eyes on You," Mary Higgins Clark
9. "Just One Us," Harlan Coben
10. "Here's to Us," Erin Ciberbrand

— Compiled by AP

APPS

The top paid iPhone apps for the week ending April 22:

1. Minecraft
2. Heads Up!
3. Plague Inc.
4. Facetime
5. Schedule
6. Sky Guide AR
7. Bloons TD 5
8. Geometry Dash
9. NBA 2K18
10. PlantSnap Plant Identification

— Compiled by AP

WEEKEND

CHECK IT OUT

Events, entertainment and other ways to fill your free time

1 'Dancing with the Stars,' athletes edition

Some reality competition seasons seem like they'll never end. Two of the oldest are trying briefer versions of their tried-and-true formulas. Like "American Idol," "Dancing with the Stars" is shortening its spring season. Athletes have often found success on "DWTS," so why not schedule an entire slate of them? The four-week competition

includes such well-known names as (below, left to right) retired pro baseball player Johnny Damon, infamous Olympic skater Tonya Harding, 2018 Olympic skater Adam Rippon and retired basketball star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

• "Dancing with the Stars" premieres Tuesday on AFN-Spectrum.



2

Brothers Osborne take different country road

Most country artists seem unwilling to go anywhere near political controversy. Not Brothers Osborne. The up-and-coming sibling duo figure they have nothing to lose, and indeed have gained some fans from speaking their minds. The brothers are determined to do things their way, even it means an Academy of Country Music Awards performance snub. The awards, and the music, speak for themselves.

• Music profile, review on Page 36.



3

Markle biographer says royal-to-be is well-suited

British journalist Andrew Morton loves to write about the personal lives of royals. He released a tell-all about Princess Di in 1992, and recently took on Wallis Simpson, who famously caused King Edward VIII to abdicate his throne to be with her in 1936. Next up: Meghan Markle, the American actress set to marry Prince Harry next month. "Meghan: A Hollywood Princess" tells of Markle's ambitions, motivations and the refreshing modernity she brings to one of the stuffiest institutions in the world — the royal family.

• Book review on Page 38.

4

Kimmel puts 'Avenger' actors to the test

Actors Scarlett Johansson, Dave Bautista, Mark Ruffalo, Danai Gurira and Tom Hiddleston certainly were coworkers on set of "Avengers: Infinity War," but late-night TV host Jimmy Kimmel wanted to see how well they really knew each other. This week, Kimmel put their friendship to the test in a new game show called "Guess the Avenger." Look to see who learned to play spoons in a bar, who accidentally flashed someone in an airplane bathroom and who engaged in coital shenanigans on a golf course (ewwww).

• Watch it at tinyurl.com/y7epqc2d.

WEEKEND: MOVIES



POW! BANG! CHA-CHING!

‘Infinity War’ caps a decade of success for Marvel Studios

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

Marvel Studios President Kevin Feige talks about his job like a fan who's just lucky to be there.

To hear his genuine enthusiasm about the movies, the actors, and the stories almost belies the fact that he is essentially the architect of and driving force behind Hollywood's most valuable brand that has in barely more than 10 years netted more than \$14.8 billion in worldwide grosses (according to com-Score) and become the envy of every studio executive in town.

He's a mogul with a fanboy's verve who has helped to change the very fabric of the entertainment industry.

Ten years ago, many moviegoers didn't know who Iron Man was, and those who did thought of him as a minor comic book character. This weekend, Marvel Studios' 19th film, "Avengers: Infinity War," an epic mashup of characters once considered to be part of the "superhero B-list," from Iron Man to Star-Lord, opens in theaters worldwide. It is cruising for a record-breaking debut that could surpass "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" as the biggest opening ever.

The scope of the Marvel effect is somewhat difficult to pin down, especially with a force as formidable as The Walt Disney Co. behind it. (Disney

acquired Marvel Entertainment for \$4 billion in 2009.)

It's revitalized careers (Robert Downey Jr.), minted movie stars (Chris Hemsworth, Chris Evans and Chris Pratt, to name a few), and become an outpost for Oscar-winners too (like Robert Redford, Gwyneth Paltrow, Anthony Hopkins, Natalie Portman, Jeff Bridges, Michael Douglas and Cate Blanchett).

And beyond that, every few months the studio seems to be breaking new ground, whether it's as small as a change in tone, like "Thor: Ragnarok," or as big as producing a downright cultural phenomenon, such as "Black Panther," now the third highest-grossing domestic film of all time.

"We dream big at Marvel Studios. We have very lofty aspirations at Marvel Studios. For those dreams to be surpassed is saying something," Feige, 44, said of "Black Panther's" success.

And it shows no sign of slowing down, or running out of story. They have 70 years of comic book source material to draw on, after all.

"There are still things that are key elements to a lot of our characters in their comic incarnations that we haven't even done yet for characters who have had three or four movies," Feige said. "It is an amazing wealth of creative material to pull from."

Feige is amused when reporters try to predict Marvel's next move, or make big conclusions based on what's just

happened. Under Feige, Marvel is not looking in the rear-view mirror.

When "Thor: Ragnarok" came out, he remembers reading articles declaring that, "Marvel is committing to a sur-realist, silly tone" and just laughed.

"I thought, 'We have 'Black Panther' coming out in three months! They don't even know what's coming,'" Feige said. "We're always thinking ahead. Just when people think they can pin us down, we go somewhere else and that's going to happen again after 'Infinity War' in the build-up to the next Avengers film. And we had meetings earlier today about 2024 and 2025."

Misunderstanding Feige's vision is almost a tradition at this point, going back to Comic-Con in 2006, where he revealed his plans for the first few films — "Iron Man," "Ant-Man" and "The Incredible Hulk" — and all anyone wrote about was how Marvel Studios didn't have the rights to Spider-Man (Sony does), the X-Men or the Fantastic Four (those reside at 20th Century Fox).

Now, few would argue that "Iron Man," "Captain America," "Thor," "Black Panther," "Guardians of the Galaxy" and even "Doctor Strange" and "Ant-Man" aren't veritable A-listers on their own, and even more powerful together, making up what is perhaps Marvel's greatest innovation: the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

Which Avenger will die in 'Infinity War'?

By MICHAEL CAVNA
The Washington Post

On Monday night's episode of Disney-owned "Jimmy Kimmel Live!," the late-night host asked his five guests promoting "Avengers: Infinity War" who might die in the new film. After all, Kimmel noted, someone has to perish in a war.

The cast members stayed mum, but their nervous laughter only seemed to confirm the speculation that has swirled around the Disney/Marvel movie for months. Surely one of the major superhero players won't live to see the final credits?

Here is our breakdown on who, among the major players, is most likely to die in "Infinity War":

10. The Hulk/Bruce Banner: The Hulk makes for an awfully big target, narratively speaking, and as "Thor: Ragnarok" showed, he can be beaten in the ring. Plus, there are obstacles to Hulk starring in his own film again (the past two have not been memorable). Yet Hulk has become a great second (green) banana, and besides, Mark Ruffalo is still working on a multiyear contract. Verdict: Hulk lives!

9. Thor: If Taika Waititi's "Ragnarok" hadn't rejuvenated the solo franchise, perhaps Chris Hemsworth's Thor would be at greater risk. But Thor is too vital now, and a crucial comedic member, too. So our prediction: Thor lives on.

8. Spider-Man: Here's the question: Would Marvel ever ice Spider-Man (Tom Holland) in its own universe while Peter Parker continues his solo franchise for Sony? Our verdict: It's too soon to close off that route, as young Holland's puppy-dog friskiness enlivens all scenes opposite the relatively aging Avengers and Guardians.

7. The Winter Soldier: Once upon a time, Bucky (Sebastian Stan) seemed vulnerable. Now, having been last spotted healing in Wakanda, he is poised to take a lead role going forward — especially if Captain America goes down.

6. Hawkeye: Jeremy Renner's archer is so vulnerable. Because, really, who other than Black Widow would deeply miss him?

5. Gamora: Being Thanos' daughter could ultimately prove to be a narrative sacrifice, but then again: Big baddie Thanos (Josh Brolin) might have no love lost in his mission to crush and conquer, family be damned.

4. Iron Man: Robert Downey Jr. has gotten awfully expensive to keep around as ringleader and spiritual godfather after a decade. But given how one film too soon to say farewell to Tony Stark.

3. Captain America: Marvel loves to ice Cap (Chris Evans) in the comic books, so the end is likely near for Steve Rogers on screen, too. But given how much noise Evans has recently made about departing the franchise after "Avengers 4," our money is on one more film from Captain America before, say, Bucky or the Falcon inherits the shield.

2. Loki: Super-baddie Thanos might make short work of Thor's sib if he has no more need for him. But it might not be worth losing the franchise's comedic lightning bolt when another major stone-holder might be more vulnerable.

1. Vision: When "Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol. 2" stars promoted their movie last year on "Jimmy Kimmel," Team Disney/Marvel made sure to include a star (Michael Rooker) whose character was meeting his maker in that very film. In that context, does it loom ominous that Paul Bettany was at the end of Kimmel's couches Monday night?

"Avengers: Infinity War," starring, from left, Tom Holland, Robert Downey Jr., Dave Bautista, Chris Pratt and Pom Klementieff, is the 19th film within the Marvel Cinematic Universe. It combines nine franchises and more than 30 major characters.

MARVEL STUDIOS/AP

WEEKEND: MOVIES

By MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN
The Washington Post

What does Thanos want? That question lies at the heart of "Avengers: Infinity War," the at-once dark, maddeningly open-ended yet fiercely entertaining new chapter in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), which pits the titular global do-gooders — still scattered here and there after their 2016 falling-out with one another in "Captain America: Civil War" — against a cosmic villain who has been coyly signaling his evil intentions ever since the very first "Avengers" movie, in 2012. And that's without ever really appearing on-screen, except in teasing cameos.

Oh sure, everyone knows he wants the Infinity Stones. Or at least everyone who's been paying attention to the previous 18 MCU movies. Ever since 2008's "Iron Man," these interconnected installments have introduced audiences to the six gemlike "singularities": color-coded stones controlling power, space, time, mind, soul and reality. Taken collectively, these artifacts are the mother of all MacGuffins — plot devices that drive the narrative, but may or may not have much to do with the true message of the story.

But what does Thanos want with them? That question is answered, in a film that presents a villain in a more nuanced, complex (and arguably even sympathetic) way than most comic book movies do. That's especially unexpected, given that he's a purple alien (voiced by Josh Brolin), created from CGI motion-capture, with skin that looks like a cat's couloupe. What is not unexpected is the film's death toll. Fanboys and fangirls have already steeled themselves to the eventuality that favorite characters will die here. Opening with a distress call from the Asgardian refugee spaceship



From left: Benedict Cumberbatch, Robert Downey Jr., Mark Ruffalo and Benedict Wong star in "Avengers: Infinity War."

MARVEL STUDIOS/AP

Superhero bonanza

'Infinity War' stunningly dark, but still wildly entertaining

that was seen fleeing planetary destruction at the end of last year's "Thor: Ragnarok," "Infinity War" gets that outcome out of that way earlier, paving a path forward for a film that, while very funny for much of its 2½-hour running time, ends on an almost stunningly somber note.

It should be mentioned that there is already a sequel planned for next year that is likely to act as a corrective — short of bringing

people back from the grave. In the manner of the second and third "Matrix" films, and the "Deathly Hallows" segments of the Harry Potter films, you can expect that upcoming movie to be more of a conclusion to a giant, two-part saga — complete with this installment's cliffhanger ending — than a free-standing sequel.

Death and destruction, of course, is what Thanos has in mind. But unlike many cartoonish

villains, his motives, as explained in flashbacks and speeches, are not those of universal domination. Rather, he wants to kill half of the universe's population — which is threatened by overpopulation and dwindling resources — to save the other half. His coldblooded calculation is not only a perversion of altruism — it's an argument for extermination. But, for a superhero movie, the nuance with which the film presents this

horrible scenario is refreshing.

As "Infinity War" gets underway, Thanos has already acquired the Power Stone and is seeking the other five — four of which are in the control of characters we know from previous films. The location of the sixth, or Soul Stone, has long been unknown, but it will bring Thanos the power he seeks, not to mention to a moral and emotional precipice that will probably strike many viewers as startling for a film of this kind. I heard audible gasps, more than once, at a recent press screening.

I also heard lots of laughter. The entertainment media has made much of so-called Avengers Fatigue, from Marvel exhausting its storytelling capabilities — as well as our attention span. But brothers Anthony and Joe Russo, who return as co-directors after "Civil War" and its predecessor, "Winter Soldier," move the pace briskly and with frequent levity, as heroes from various Marvel franchises keep throwing things — sometimes literally — at Thanos, and as the scene of the action shifts from the "Guardians of the Galaxy" team's spaceship to Black Panther's African homeland of Wakanda, to at one point, Scotland. It is there that the synthetic humanoid known as Vision (Paul Bettany) — who wears the Mind Stone like a diadem on his forehead — and girlfriend Wanda Maximoff, aka Scarlet Witch (Elizabeth Olsen), have gone off the grid.

Needless to say, that cozy love nest won't stay cozy long.

"Infinity War" is big, blustery and brave, taking viewers to places that they might not be used to going. Whether Thanos ends up getting everything he wants is one thing. But audiences should be warned that they probably won't.

"Avengers: Infinity War" is rated PG-13 for intense sequences of sci-fi violence and action throughout, and some crude references. Running time: 149 minutes.

FROM PAGE 24

This idea of an interconnected, ever-expanding "universe" of characters and films is something that many have since tried to copy to varying degrees of success. It seems audiences don't begrudge Marvel for creating the concept, but are somewhat more skeptical of those trying to capitalize on it.

"(Marvel's) approach doesn't seem nearly as cynical as when you see another studio trying to do it with, say, 'Ghostbusters' or DC," said Wall Street Journal reporter Ben Fritz, who delves into Marvel's history in the book "The Big Picture: The Fight for the Future of Movies." "People are like, 'Oh I know what you're doing; you're trying to copy Marvel.' But Marvel did it first, and Marvel has still done it best."

"Sequel fatigue" doesn't even seem to apply to Marvel films anymore.

"I think you can look at Marvel as a grand narrative experiment," said "Infinity War" co-director Joe Russo. "Never before in films have we seen this many franchises combined over this many years into one giant mosaic. Two-hour, two-dimensional storytelling has dominated American culture for 100 years, and now we're consuming content with such extreme speed that we need new forms of storytelling. I think what Marvel is doing is a new form of storytelling."

"Infinity War" co-screenwriter Stephen McPeely, who also co-wrote the three Captain America films, said Feige should get the film academy's Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award for his impact on the industry.

He's clearly changed the way Hollywood works, or at least the top box office end of it," McPeely said. "It's



MARVEL STUDIOS/AP

It's been six years since Thanos, played by Josh Brolin, first appeared in the credits of "The Avengers." Audiences will get better acquainted with Marvel's villain in "Avengers: Infinity War."

in part because Kevin has a really good mind for story — he's ambitious — but he's not so ambitious that he's not going to do the right thing for the movie in front of his face."

While navel-gazing isn't Feige's favorite activity, the 10-year anniversary of "Iron Man" hitting theaters has provided an excuse to reflect a bit. He still remembers the early days, when they had everything to prove and felt grateful for the chance to produce films on their own. While the grand plans and concurrent filmmaking have gotten more complex over the years and "the days have gotten longer," Feige said the fundamental processes for how they make films goes back to the beginning.

"It was in the cutting rooms of 'Iron Man 1' that in a lot of ways the Marvel Studios process was born — of just keep trying things and keep turning things over and don't rest on your laurels and just because something is working doesn't mean it can't work better," Feige said.

Audiences won't have to wait too long for another Avengers, either. The fourth Avengers film, also directed by Joe and Anthony Russo and written by McPeely and Christopher Markus, is just around the corner, set for a May 2019 release. It's a continuation of the story that begins in "Infinity War" where a still-fractured Avengers face Thanos (Josh Brolin). Little is being revealed beyond that. The film is said to be full of surprises.

"We make movies we believe in. We make movies that we think will be entertaining to ourselves and think about ourselves as the first audience members for any movie we make. Any idea that comes up in a room: Would we be entertained by this? Would we be moved by this? Would we be surprised by this?" Feige said.

"It goes back to the movies I loved growing up. I always loved sequels. I never found myself being cynical or dismissive of sequels. If they were bad, I was disappointed. But I always loved the promise of seeing the further storylines or further adventures of characters I'd grown to love. That's all we're doing."

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



By CHARLES SINGLETARY
Shacknews.com

Fresh take on episodic adventure

The Council's opener 'Mad Ones' sets stage for compelling mystery



Photos courtesy of Big Bad Wolf

The Council's "Episode 1: The Mad Ones" plunges players into a tale of intrigue and manipulation in the style of a classic murder mystery, where a cast of characters hide their own dark secrets.

Despite technical flaws, the Telltale formula has propelled the studio to the upper echelons of gaming, leading more developers to leap into the episodic adventure pond following their games' success. Big Bad Wolf, a French indie developer, is the latest to step up to the plate and is doing so with a secret society-centered mystery adventure set in the 1700s.

The Council's "Episode 1: The Mad Ones" introduces us to a colorful cast in grand fashion. Our protagonist, Louis de Richet, is invited to the home of Lord Mortimer. Louis is a member of a secret society alongside his mother, who has gone missing at the home of Lord Mortimer. Mortimer occasionally welcomes esteemed guests to his home and, while Louis has an agenda of his own when accepting his invitation, it seems everyone else there has a mystery of their own.

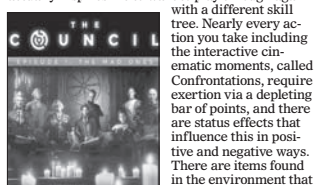
I'll end discussion of the story by expressing that, while a murder isn't seen explicitly in the first episode, it feels like there's certainly murder that you don't want to acknowledge lingering in the air. There's a whole lot of mystery in Lord Mortimer's home, and it's the foundation of the game's charm. Now, on to the gameplay experience and why The Council gets me excited for future episodic experiences.

The Council's rhythm adheres to the adventure genre's basics, progressing similarly to Telltale's many experiences, or "Life Is Strange." There are short cutscenes and conversations that lead into free exploration of an environment, imploring me to investigate their surroundings thoroughly. Also, like the other titles, there are dramatic moments that usher the story along and typically result in a major choice I needed to make.

The biggest key to The Council's improvement on the episodic adventure formula is the embrace of RPG elements and the willingness to communicate what things I was missing out on in conversations and encounters. I started the episode by choosing whether Louis specializes as a diplomat, occultist or detective. This choice determines starting skills, which influenced my choices in conversation and what things Louis would notice with characters and the environment.

The episode is broken into sections, and I gained experience in between that allowed me to improve

my skills. The skills that land under my chosen expertise were cheaper to improve, while things outside my understanding were harder to acquire. As I progressed through the episode, various prompts would appear on screen to remind me that there are some things going on that are beyond my character's understanding. This is a rare insight into the machinations of this type of adventure game and actually inspires me to want to play through again



with a different skill tree. Nearly every action you take including the interactive cinematic moments, called Confrontations, require exertion via a depleting bar of points, and there are status effects that influence this in positive and negative ways. There are items found in the environment that repair or enhance these effects, adding another layer of interaction that is sorely missing from adventure games.

Visually, "Mad Ones" can seem very stiff in some moments while feeling fluid in others. The textures and light stand out, but the animations and expressions for the characters themselves could use some improvement. Nevertheless, the art style perfectly matches the game's 1700s setting. The more realistic style, versus Telltale's more comic book-influenced approach for "The Walking Dead," for instance, enhances the impact of the character's interactions and adds to the more grotesque elements in the art design. The voice acting is adequate, as well.

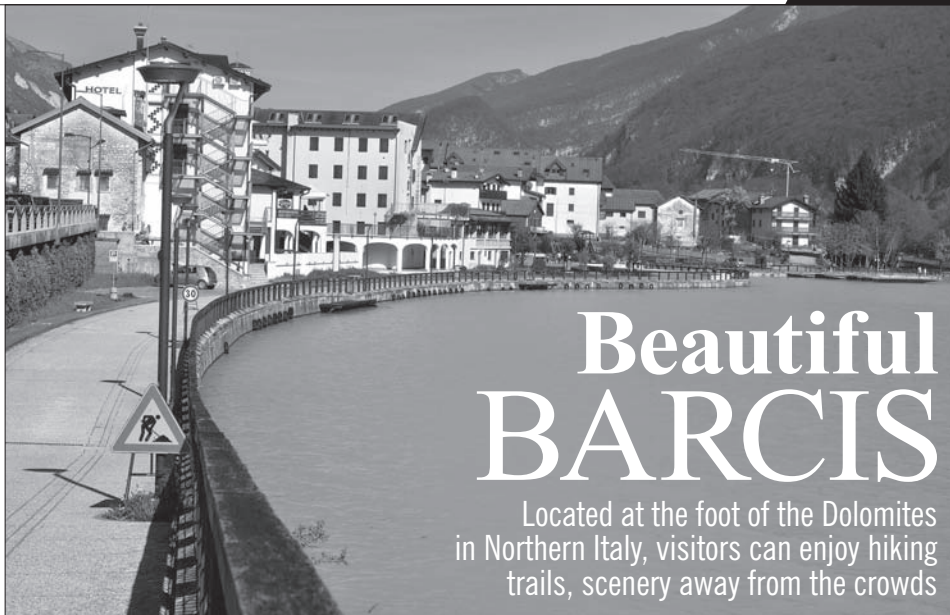
Episodic games have a very special appeal to me, as they're able to fit snugly into my busy gaming schedule without too much demand. Despite the bite-sized experiences, the stories have impact and entertain, so the evolution of genre concept that Big Bad Wolf has infused into The Council excites me. The length of these episodes is no reason not to include a skill tree and progression system, actually adding even more weight to your every decision.

"Episode 1" isn't a perfect start, but it is quite a wonderful foundation to build upon.

Online: thecouncil-game.com

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe



Beautiful BARCIS

Located at the foot of the Dolomites in Northern Italy, visitors can enjoy hiking trails, scenery away from the crowds

BY KENT HARRIS
Stars and Stripes

Spring has sprung in Northern Italy, and that means the mountain bikes and hiking boots have come out of storage.

For those in shape — or those who want to get in shape quickly (not recommended) — the Dolomites north and east of Aviano Air Base beckon. There are multiple spots that one could use as a base for such endeavors. But one of the prettiest is well-known to most of those based at Aviano: Lake Barcis.

Barcis, known for its turquoise-hued waters, is more than worth a visit in itself. There are almost two dozen marked hiking trails further up into the mountains and a handful of suggested mountain bike trails.

But if you're into relaxation mode and would prefer a casual stroll along a pretty mountain lake, Barcis is hard to beat. Visit right now, and there's hardly anyone else there. That changes in the summer, but even then, many Italians prefer to head to the beach than the mountains.

Don't bother trying to get onto the lake when it's not summer. Just about all the recreation services are closed. But the lake itself is probably best enjoyed from its shores anyway.

The lake is artificially formed and is the result of putting a dam near the convergence of two fast-flowing rivers — the Cellina and Pentina. There is some boating. And fishing. And

swimming. But those seem like afterthoughts for much of the year.

It's possible to walk all the way around the lake, but that would involve walking along roads that diverge from the water a bit on the south end. The town is on the north end, and there are good paths along almost all of the northern edge. It's easy to spend a few hours walking along those paths. Numerous benches and tables are set up for picnickers, and there are several small playgrounds for kids. During much of the year, it's possible to combine a trip to Barcis with the mountain resort town of PIANCAVALLO, which is closer to Aviano. There's a windy mountain road connecting them. To get to that road, though, you'll have to navigate one of two bridges that span the lake. Both are narrow, but the one on the western end is not suitable for large vehicles.

harris.kent@stripes.com

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Lake Barcis is located in the Dolomite mountains, about a half-hour drive north of Aviano Air Base. The easiest way to get there from Aviano is to go through the industrial park and take the SP251 toward Montreale and head up the mountain to Barcis. Alternatively, there's a small road (closed for part of the year due to snow) that connects Barcis to Piancavallo, which is easily accessible from Aviano.

TIMES

As long as the sun is up (and preferably out in force), it's a good time to visit Barcis. Most shops take the long traditional Italian lunch off, and some are closed on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.

COSTS

It costs 60 euro cents an hour to park in one of the several lots around the town. Other than that, pack a picnic lunch, and a trip to Barcis can be very inexpensive.

FOOD

There are a handful of restaurants in the town. Many serve basics: sandwiches and snacks. There's a wine bar and a few more upscale restaurants as well.

INFORMATION

Barcis technically has a tourist office, but it's on the move, not open for much of the year and not easy to find. It's possible to get info at the offices in Pordenone (Via Mazzini nr.2, 0434 520381) or Piancavallo (Via Collalto, 1, 0434 655191).

— Kent Harris



PHOTOS BY KENT HARRIS/Stars and Stripes

Even during the busiest time of the year, Barcis is not overrun by tourists. But the lake it straddles, top and above, along with the bell tower of St. John the Baptist Church, right, are must-see attractions.



WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Warm to the possibilities of a stopover in Iceland

Iceland is certainly cold and remote, but in recent years, this island nation has vaulted from out-of-the-way backwater to can't-miss destination — both as a stopover and for entire vacations — and tourism is booming.

Part of the recent travel surge is convenience, of a sort. Nowadays, many North Americans are dropping in to Iceland on their way to or from Europe. Both Icelandair and Wow Air typically allow a 24-hour or longer stopover for no additional airfare. All you need is a passport, a rental car, and an extra day or two.

The challenge for the casual visitor is figuring out what to cram into a 24-hour stay. Iceland's array of natural wonders is famously spectacular, but you'll have a spectacular time only by making a good plan in advance.

If you thrill to the idea of an Iceland stopover, consider the whirlwind itinerary outlined here. These suggestions assume you're visit in summer, when the roads are clear and daylight is virtually endless. From early June to mid-July, it never really gets dark, letting you extend your daylight sightings any day as far as your own energy level will take you.

The capital city, Reykjavik, is the natural hub for any visit, with an excellent assortment of accommodations, restaurants, shops and nightlife. Reykjavik easily has enough sights to fill a day or two, but with limited time, I'd spend most of my daylight hours out in Iceland's legendary countryside.

Morning: Conveniently, the famous Blue Lagoon thermal-bath spa is just 15 minutes from the Keflavik International Airport — and in the summer it opens nice and early. If you time your flight to arrive in the early morning, by the time you deplane, clear customs and pick up a rental car, you can head straight there for a relaxing outdoor soak in milky blue, geothermal waters.



Rick Steves

But you can't just show up and hope to slip in — reservations are required. Book at least several days ahead. **Midday:** Refreshed from your soak, drive 45 minutes into Reykjavik. Check into your hotel, have lunch and browse a bit. I'd walk down to the harborfront for a photo op at the popular Sun Voyager sculpture (shaped like an old Viking boat), then follow the shoreline past the cutting-edge Harpa concert hall and moored boats to the Old Harbor, where you'll find a few seafood restaurants on the piers.

Afternoon: Set out from Reykjavik to the Golden Circle route for some serious sightseeing. This excursion offers a rewarding ratio of natural wonders per miles driven. Without stops, the entire circuit requires about four hours of drive-



CAMERON HEWITT/RickSteves.com

Gullfoss waterfall is a top sight on Iceland's Golden Circle route.

ing — but a long Icelandic day will let you wring the maximum out of your visit.

The essential trio of stops along the way includes Þingvellir National Park, situated in an extraordinary gorge caused by the slow separation of the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates; a bubbling, steaming geothermal field with Iceland's most active geyser — Geysir; and Gullfoss, one of the country's most impressive waterfalls. Since these major Golden Circle sights technically never "close," you can go at your own pace.

Evening: Grab a bit to eat in Golden Circle country (limited options) or hold out for your return to downtown Reykjavik. Restaurants in the city keep long hours; you'll find plenty of spots still serving as late as 10 p.m. Food and drink are expensive in Iceland — but at least you'll pay exactly what you see on the menu (there's no tipping, and taxes are included in the menu prices). You can always economize

by eating an Icelandic hot dog (pýlsa), a fast-food favorite made from Icelandic lamb, pork and beef.

For a longer layover: With 48 hours, add a visit to the dramatic South Coast, which sits in the shadow of two glacier-topped volcanoes. With remarkable waterfalls (Seljalandsfoss), black-sand beaches (Reynisfjara), and hikeable glaciers (Solheimajökull), the South Coast is a close runner-up to the Golden Circle as a top day trip. Plan on a 2.5-hour drive each way (without stops), or consider joining a bus excursion from Reykjavik.

Iceland appeals to the curious and the adventurous. This little island stubbornly exceeds the lofty expectations of its many visitors — even those who visit in just one jam-packed day.

Rick Steves (www.ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public TV and radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

Orleans remembers Joan

It was through the interventions of a humble peasant girl that the siege on the French city of Orleans was lifted on May 8, 1429. Celebrations to commemorate the overthrow of the English, led by the 17-year-old Joan of Arc, were organized by a grateful population the very next year and have continued since, making the memorial procession held there every May 8 the oldest of its kind in all of France.

The Fêtes de Jeanne D'Arc Orleans is a mix of parades, folklore and religious acts recalling Joan's lasting influence.

Program highlights for the April 29 through May 8 event include the re-enactment of Joan's entry into the city through the Burgundy Gate at 9:45 p.m. April 29, a cavalcade tracing Joan's journey on horseback through the surrounding countryside May 1, the battle standard ceremony followed by a sound and light show from 10 p.m. May 7, and a military parade and commemorative procession from 2:50 p.m. May 8. From May 5 through 8, a medieval market populated by entertainers and craftsmen of bygone days can be visited on the Campo Santo. Online: orleans-metropole.fr

Munich's night of music

Sweet sounds will ring out all over Munich come Saturday night, when the city's annual Lange Nacht der Musik trans-



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler

forms venues from huge concert halls to cozy local bars, posh clubs, churches and other cultural institutions into stages for live musical performances across all genres.

From 8 p.m. until 3 a.m. the following day, more than 100 venues host concerts and other events connected with music such as dance, cabaret and DJ sets. With no official route to follow, visitors can peruse the program beforehand to plot a path or just drift between venues on a whim. A peak at this year's program reveals such wonderfully diverse offers as hip-hop with the chamber orchestra of the Munich Symphony in a bank lobby; reggae in a design hotel; Andalusian- and Arabian-style music at the Cervantes Institute; or a tour through town on a party bus.

A 15-euro bracelet is the key

to getting through all doors and traveling from one performance to the next by means of a special shuttle bus service (the ticket does not entitle the bearer to use the regular public transportation network). The bracelet can be picked up starting at 1 p.m. on April 28 in a tent set up on Odeonsplatz or from 8 p.m. on at any of the participating venues. Online: muenchner.de/musiknacht.

Cordoba's spring fling

The Andalusian city of Cordoba, capital of Spain during Roman and Moorish times, retains much of its medieval charm in the form of its layout and architecture. While the winding, stone-paved lanes of its old quarter and soaring mosque make Cordoba a rewarding destination year-round, the onset of spring triggers one celebration after the other.

May Crosses (April 27-May 1) is a traditional act in which huge crosses adorned with flowers, potted plants, shawls and other decor are set up in the city's courtyards and squares. Local clubs and neighborhood associations set up impromptu bars in which tapas and drinks are served to the sound of traditional Sevillanas.

The Battle of the Flowers (April 29) sees a cavalcade of flower-bedecked floats pass along the Paseo de la Victoria and Argentina. The "battle" takes place between those riding on the floats and the onlookers: The



Courtesy of turismo cordoba

During the Patios Festival in Cordoba, Spain, homeowners decorate their outdoor spaces in a bid to create the most beautiful patio.

riders toss carnations into the crowd, and the spectators throw them back.

The Patios Festival (May 1-3) offers glimpses into the normally private spheres of Cordoba's residents. Over centuries, the city's arid climate gave rise to a construction style in which houses were built around a patio or courtyard, often with a fountain and well for collecting rain water. Plants added color and a sense of freshness. Since 1921, local authorities have organized a competition in which homeowners lavishly decorate their spaces in bids to be named holders of the city's most beautiful

patio. A simultaneously-running festival offers song and dance performances as the local fine wine is imbibed.

The Cordoba Fair (May 19-26) celebrates the feast of Our Lady of Health. The el Arenal fairgrounds is the place to see ladies and gentlemen elegantly clad in traditional costume prance about on horseback and to visit the colorful tents known as casetas for food, drink and fun. In contrast to fairs such as that in Seville, the casetas here are open to the public. The fair opens in mid-afternoon and carries on until the morning hours. Online: english.turismodecordoba.org

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe



Photos courtesy of Jackie Broome

A plate of various delicacies is served at Oriental Delight Cafe in Kaiserslautern, Germany. The new eatery offers a variety of sweet and savory treats for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

After Hours: Germany

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

The word "delight" is a very strong term. If a restaurant chooses to use that powerful word in its name, it had better live up to heightened expectations.

Luckily, Oriental Delight Cafe in Kaiserslautern does exactly that.

More than a few of the assorted pastries, baked goods and other delicacies offered at the new downtown Kaiserslautern eatery meet this reporter's definition of the word, and the range of options available means just about anyone should be able to find something sufficiently delightful.

Start with the classic baklava, which comes in several varieties, including pistachio and walnuts. The sticky pastry is inherently sweet, but the version at Oriental Delight Cafe avoids the excess that makes some baklava recipes unpalatable. The result is a subtle, smooth, satisfying treat that doesn't drown its other flavors in sugar.

The inviting glass case at Oriental Delight Cafe holds several options similar to the ubiquitous baklava, including the substantial walnut rolls and pistachio rolls, the creamy soybean and, perhaps most interesting, the nightingale nest, a collection of tightly wrapped crispy noodles cradling small pistachios meant to represent tiny bird eggs.

A look further down the menu presents alternatives, such as sesame cookies and shortbread biscuits, that nicely balance the cafe's sweeter specialties. One unexpected highlight was the kome cookie, a delicious pastry stuffed with dates that struck this diner as a very upscale Fig Newton.

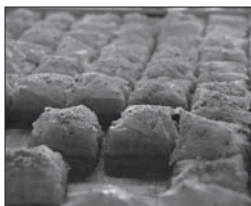
While this spread was amply delightful, Oriental Delight Cafe had a final treat. As my wife and I prepared to settle the affordable bill, the friendly young man at the counter presented a magnificent, freshly baked pastry stuffed with a spicy sausage known as sujak, and, after my wife declined the meat-based option, rushed to the back and returned with a cheesy meat-free version of the same.

The remarkable customer service capped a delightful visit to Oriental



Above: The comfortable interior of Oriental Delight Cafe provides a suitable setting to enjoy the restaurant's wide variety of delicious pastries.

Below: A tray of baklava. The new eatery offers the classic version of the treat along with several other varieties.



Delight Cafe and helped earn the eatery a premium spot on our list of local favorites. As we left, we were offered a brochure advertising a weekend breakfast buffet, ensuring it won't be long at all before we make that return visit.

broome.gregory@stripes.com
Twitter: @broomestripes

ORIENTAL DELIGHT CAFE

Location: Eisenbahnstrasse 22 in downtown Kaiserslautern.

Hours: Open Monday to Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.; Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.; Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.; and Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Food: Primarily Turkish pastries and breakfast items, along with a selection of coffee, tea and soft drinks.

Costs: Small pastries run from under one euro to 1.50 euros; more substantial options go up to 5.99 euros. Nothing exceeds two euros on an extensive drink menu. A weekend breakfast buffet, running from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, costs 9.99 euros per person.

Information: Search for Oriental Delight Cafe on Facebook for more details.

— Gregory Broome

Breaded chicken cutlets so versatile

By BECKY KRYSTAL
The Washington Post

It's hard to beat the versatility of a breaded chicken cutlet — on a salad, in a sandwich, over a bed of mashed potatoes. You can't go wrong.

The key to evenly cooked, juicy cutlets is using pieces that are thinner than the boneless, skinless chicken breast halves straight out of the package. Thinner pieces will also cook quicker, which is ideal for a weeknight dinner.

Pounding the breasts is a common solution, but that's a hassle I prefer to avoid.

Instead, I cut the breasts in half horizontally. (You could buy cutlets, but they're more expensive and I like to have greater control over the thickness.) Aim for portions that weigh 4 to 6 ounces and are about 1/2-inch thick.

Then there's the matter of breading. So many recipes call for it, but it can be problematic. First you dip the chicken in flour, which helps the egg to stick. Then you dip it in egg, which helps the bread crumbs to stick. Last, you dip it in bread crumbs, and hope they stay on.

I wanted to find an easier way. The goal was to get a good base coat on the chicken so the bread crumbs have something to stick to. A base coat with flavor is a nice bonus. Mustard came immediately to mind, as did mayonnaise. Because I wanted to ensure a crispy outside, I turned to panko, the Japanese bread crumbs whose texture bumps up the crunch even more.

I was so happy with the result I had to wonder why it took me so many years to get there.

QUICK AND CRISPY CHICKEN CUTLETS

Ingredients:

2 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (8 to 11 ounces each)

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1 cup panko bread crumbs

4 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil

Directions:

Use a sharp knife to cut horizontally through each breast half.

Spread the panko bread crumbs in a shallow dish, such as a pie plate.

Use a brush or table knife to spread the mustard on the top side of a plate. Sprinkle generously with salt and pepper.

Place the mustard-coated side of the chicken face down in the panko and press to adhere. Coat the other side of the chicken with the mustard, season lightly with salt and pepper and flip to finish coating with the panko. Transfer to a plate; repeat with the other 3 cutlets, adding more panko to the dish, as needed.

Let the breaded chicken cutlets rest for a few minutes to help the coating dry.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Line a plate with paper towels.

Once the oil shimmers — it will almost ripple — place two of the cutlets in the pan leaving room between them. Cook for about 2 1/2 minutes, until they are golden brown and crisp on the bottom.

Use a fork to turn over the cutlets (tongs may dislodge the breading); cook until the meat feels firm and the second side is deep golden brown and crisp, 2 1/2 to 3 minutes, reducing the heat as needed to keep the breading from burning. Transfer them to the lined plate.

If you reduced the heat during the cooking of the first batch, return it to medium-high once again, adding more oil as needed; once the oil is shimmering, repeat with the remaining 2 cutlets.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

BY SARA LIEBERMAN
Special to The Washington Post

“Mom! Do you have the permit?? WHERE IS THE PERMIT???” I yelled above the engine of our custom Cantieri Ernesto Riva motorboat while zooming along Italy’s Lake Como.

My heart was beating fast and my hands were shaking on the steering wheel. I had just gotten comfortable in my captain’s perch, and was trying to adjust to the throttle and watch where I was going despite the wind whipping my hair in front of my face. Then, a gust seemed to sweep away the paperwork required for taking out this stunner of a boat, at a whopping \$190 an hour.

I slowed us down, shifted to neutral and started frantically looking by my feet, in my beach bag, under the seat — careful not to drift too close to any of the million-dollar homes. My mother, meanwhile, looked around the bow, where she’d been preoccupied trying to distinguish George Clooney’s villa from the others dotting the shore.

“Got it!” she yelled, waving the laminated papers over her head. She tucked them under the life jackets and resumed her harmless stalking while I typed Clooney’s name into Google Images in search of a photo of his Villa Oleandra to compare to the homes we were seeing in real life.

“There!” I said, pointing straight ahead. “I think it’s that one. Look at how the window is shaped and where the hedges meet the little bridge.”

“YES! That’s definitely it,” she responded gleefully. “Do you think he’s home?”

It looked pretty quiet, so we got a little closer while wondering aloud what it’d be like to have spritzes with the Clooneys.

Just two days earlier, I’d introduced my mother to the famed Italian drink, and now she was hooked. “What’s in this again?” she’d asked while sipping her first, made with Aperol, Prosecco and a splash of soda, as we sat on the majestic terrace of the Il Sereno Lago di Como hotel. Our two-night stay at this luxury property, which opened last year, was a reunion of sorts as she lives in New York and I in Paris. We met up at the Milano Centrale train station, and about an hour later, we were lakeside, watching the sunset with cocktails in hand.

Jet lag — and a second round of drinks — took hold pretty quickly, so after dinner at the hotel’s exquisite (if a tad over-the-top) Michelin-starred restaurant, Berton Al Lago, we called it an early night. Plus, we had big plans for the following day. When Mom and I travel together, we often struggle to balance the art of just being with the art of doing, doing, doing. We love the idea of devouring a book in the sun while occasionally getting up to eat, swim or change one’s bathing suit purely because we packed more than one. But we also want to set an alarm to take the small local boat to the big boat to the ferry to, say, explore some gardens or learn about an 11th-century basilica.

Allora! We started the day without an alarm, but with a local boat, which we caught from the small town of Torno near the hotel. Though the port looked desolate — in that charming way an old, weathered Italian village is wont to look around arduous in both time and effort. Transportation — specifically taxis — can be expensive, so renting a car is most convenient if you’re cool navigating twisty roads and dealing with parking in pedestrian-first towns. Local buses or boats, on the other hand, might leave you buried in timetables, so pick your poison and plan accordingly.

It was dicy there for a minute, but we managed to buy our ticket and board the boat with enough time to score a seat outside, where we marveled at the sparkling water and the mountains soaring high above it. Soon enough, we docked at Tremezzo, which is on the lake’s western banks. From there, many passengers headed for the Villa Carlotta gardens or the neighboring hamlet of Lenno, which is home to Villa del Balbianello, a stunning estate that

Forget spritzes, shopping & fancy hotels.

The best part of Lake Como

is being on it



SARA LIEBERMAN/For The Washington Post

Claudia Lieberman, sitting in a teak Cantieri Ernesto Riva motorboat, searches her phone — and a map — for help spotting actor George Clooney’s villa on Lake Como in Italy.

appeared in scenes from the James Bond movie “Casino Royale” and “Star Wars: Episode II — Attack of the Clones.” Mom and I, however, were off to the very Wes Anderson Grand Hotel Tremezzo.

Dating to the 1900s, the former palace, which has orange ginnings and manicured bushes, looms over the lake. We had time to kill before our spa treatments, so we channeled our inner Greta Garbo (a former guest) and sat in the sun at the hotel’s T Beach cafe for a midday spritz. We peeked into opulent lounges with jewel-colored couches, marble columns and art nouveau ceilings fit for royalty.

The spa itself had a more modern feel, and following 90 blissful minutes of relaxation, our bodies glistening with oil, we cozed up on circular daybeds in the relaxation room. The desire to linger was great, but we also felt the call to do, do, do, so we showered, dressed and headed for the ferry to the town of Bellagio, known as the “Pearl of Lake Como” for its leafy pergolas, narrow cobblestone alleys and boutique shopping.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

quiet
corner
PHOTOGRAPHY

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It didn't take long for Mom to find a buttery-soft leather handbag for herself and snakeskin-covered bangles for me and my sister. Further along, she picked up some braided belts for my father and brother at a boutique called Quelli della Pelle, which has been making leather accessories by hand in Bellagio since 1978.

Soon enough, stores began to close for the evening and hunger beckoned again. From the map, it appeared that the restaurant we'd booked for dinner was close enough to walk to, but it was definitely not in the center of town — hence the funny looks and honks we got from drivers whizzing by us as we traipsed along the side of the winding road. Finally, just as our feet were about to give out, we found it. Silvio, a five-generation family establishment, is known not only for its stunning setting but for a famous dish made with perch (pesce persico), one of the most popular of the 28 species of lake fish. To drink, we decided to shake things up by ordering a Falaangina wine with our plump tomato and fresh mozzarella salad. For our mains, we shared butter and sage ravioli, and the aforementioned fish served with a truffle and Parmesan cream sauce, which our waiter happily described in detailed English, as we understood little-to-no Italian. Allora!

By the time we finished our tiramisu, it was dark. The ferries had stopped running and the wait for the boat was ages — not to mention that the ride would take just as long. Our best hope for returning to our hotel — a good 30 to 45 minutes by car — was a taxi. Much to our surprise, this could cost nearly as much as dinner itself (about \$75) and would require calling several services to find a willing driver. Apparently, people dine where they sleep in and around Como. It was a white-knuckle trip — and one that required a visit to the ATM because “cash only” — but we made it back while managing to keep dinner where it belonged.

We deemed the next day, before our late-afternoon departure, a chill day. The plan was to sit by Il Sereno's glorious infinity pool, lounge on its lime-green chair cushions and, of course, have couple more spritzes. But, as if on cue, we got antsy sometime around 1 p.m., which is when we decided to rent the Riva boat. Its shiny teal exterior had been enticing me ever since I saw it bobbing in the water on our first day.

“Only if you drive,” my mother said. “Of course,” I retorted jubilantly, hiding my fear of operating a vehicle that doesn't have brakes. Despite a love for boating shaped by growing up on a canal in Long Island's south shore, I'd long ago deemed myself a better passenger. Mom, however, is known for her nifty navigation skills, so the keys landed in my lap.

Save for that brief panic over the paperwork, it was the best part of our trip. It's one thing to see the lake from its perimeter, or even as a passenger on a larger boat, but to coast along its surface at your own pace; to, essentially, exist within in it, well, it was a perfect blend of doing and being. The only thing missing was that fizzy orange drink.

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific

WILD WALL



The author's mother-in-law follows the narrow path westward along the Great Wall of China at the Moya Shike Natural Scenic Area outside Beijing.



PHOTOS BY ANNA HARTLEY/For The Washington Post

A section of the Great Wall, as seen through a crumbling guard tower. The path loops up and down, and is often very steep.

Authentic, deserted stretch of the Great Wall of China full of beauty and secrets

BY ANNA HARTLEY

Special to The Washington Post

Tires crunch the gravel as our driver turns around and makes his way back down the narrow access road, leaving my fiancé, his mother and me alone in front of an empty building. The air is cool and fresh, and a few white clouds move briskly across the blue sky. Beijing, with its more than 20 million inhabitants, gleaming skyscrapers and intermittent layer of smog, is a safe 50 miles

to the south. All being well, we'll see the driver again in about four hours, at our pickup location.

I check the WeChat message on my phone again. "Behind [the building] there's a path uphill to the wall. Usually, a farmer can point you to it. Follow it up." There are no farmers to be seen on this bright November morning, but the path is there, and the valley swallows us up in minutes. Overhanging branches graze our jackets and backpacks, and dead leaves scatter underfoot. Something rustles in the undergrowth. A squirrel? This late in the year, the valley — which becomes lush and green with the arrival of spring — is brown and quiet.

My gaze drifts up from the uneven, rocky path to scan the tops of the hills. As we round another corner, the view clears and I see what I've been searching for. A frisson of excitement runs through me. Standing high over us is a tower of

the Great Wall of China.

The Great Wall is a bit of a misnomer, as there was never one single structure that spanned modern-day China. Rather, a number of large defensive walls were built by various rulers from as early as the fifth century B.C. through the mid-17th century, often hundreds of miles apart and with little relationship to one another.

Yet one of those sections, the Ming Wall, is recognized all over the world. Built during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), it stretches from a fort at Jiayuguan near the Gobi Desert in the west, all the way past Beijing to the sea at Shanhai-guan in the east. By some estimates, it is 5,500 miles long.

Unlike other sections that were made of rammed earth and straw, most of the Ming Wall around Beijing is built on a foundation of cut stone and bricks held together with an early — but very strong

— mortar made of lime and sticky rice glue. With crenelated ramparts and tall towers, it is the Great Wall of my imagination.

As visitors in China for only about a week, we are lucky to be here at all. Less than half an hour ago, we drove past a large parking lot filled with tour buses at Mutianyu, a popular section of the Great Wall. Dozens of bus drivers stood around chatting beside their giant vehicles, waiting for their groups to return. Sites like that, and Badaling, some 40 miles to the west, are immensely in demand among day trippers, receiving millions of visitors per year, but more closely resemble theme parks than ancient sites. All over China, sections of the wall are being rebuilt by unregulated private contractors who are keen to capitalize on tourist dollars but show little interest in historically accurate restorations. Foot by foot, the largest man-made structure in the world is being paved over, funded by visitors who funnel through every year, largely unaware of what they are missing.

We might have been among them if not for an encounter with a family friend, Richard Fairbrother, two days prior. A longtime Beijing resident, he is writing a field guide about hiking on the wild, unrestored sections of the wall — his particular area of interest. Minutes after we parted, my phone lit up with messages recommending an interesting hike in the Moya Shike Natural Scenic Area near the village of Dazhenyu, including drop-off and pickup locations and the kind of familiar directions that only locals can give.

The long climb

With the tower looming over us, we climb and climb, following the meandering, narrow trail and a line of faded red ribbons. Tied to tree branches at regular intervals, they are markers left by hikers who have come before us. After 45 minutes or so of fairly steep climbing, the trail ends at a brick wall half hidden by bushes, and we clamber through an opening in the side. We're here. From beneath our feet, the wall races away in both directions, zigging and zagging along the ridge like an irregular heartbeat, punctuated by square towers. The wall itself is at once awe-inspiring and smaller than I expected. At this point, it is approximately 10 feet wide, but greatly overgrown and filled with low shrubs, leaf litter and

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crumbling bricks, leaving only a narrow path snaking through the debris. Low battlements, about waist height, protect us from the drop on either side.

I consult my phone again. Richard's instructions are clear. "Follow the wall uphill ... the downward way finishes at a dead end."

Uphill we go, pushing back branches and steadying ourselves against the walls. The red ribbons continue to pop up on branches. Although thoughtful, they are doubly unnecessary now. Not only could we not get lost here, but there is plenty of evidence that we are on the right path — the floor around us is littered with soda cans, plastic bottles and empty cigarette packets, their labels faded from the rain and sun. Later, I learn that this trash was probably left by domestic visitors from other parts of the country. Theories abound: Perhaps it represents a lack of environmental education, or simply not realizing that unlike in the cities — where teams of cleaners move through the streets like clockwork — out here in the wilderness, things lie where they fall. Whatever the cause, it is a baffling, and concerning, sight.

The path loops up and down, and is often very steep, requiring us to lunge up steps and grab onto branches and bricks for support. The three of us spread out, taking the path at our own pace, and sometimes I stop, squeeze between the notches in the rampart and stick my head out to peer down at the trees below.

Due to our late-ish start, lunch time coincides with our arrival at the first tower. It is not easy to get to — sections of it have collapsed, blocking the entrance and forcing us to climb up and over, right onto the roof. We sit with our legs dangling over the side, quietly munching on our sandwiches and making little piles out of mandarin orange peels. A startlingly clear melody

floats past on the breeze, and we spot a white bus in the valley far below, radio blaring.

In centuries past, this spot would have been an ideal place to spy an invading army. The air is fresh and free of smog, and we can see distant purplish hills for miles in every direction.

We collect our citrus peels and clamber down over the rubble. As we progress westward, each tower offers a more beautiful view than the last, their arched doorways and narrow windows framing the spectacular landscape beyond them. We stop more often just to take in the view as the early afternoon shadows grow, casting the folds of the mountain range in sharp relief. The wind blows cooler now, and we zip up our jackets under our chins. We are still alone.

Then, it just stops. From our vantage point inside a tower, we see the wall crest a hill and then appear to dissolve into nothingness. I shrug off my backpack and creep forward, edging closer until I can see over the crest and down to where the wall becomes treacherously degraded. A brick wall has been built to block the path, and beyond that there is a very steep drop. Stones litter the valley floor, as if scattered by some giant wave.

For today, our hike is done. In a few minutes, we'll begin the steep, scrambling descent to Dazhenyu, where our driver should be waiting for us. In four hours, we've covered approximately four miles — a minuscule fraction of the wall and all that this vast country has to offer. Yet I can already see what draws Richard back here over and over. The lonely wild wall is full of beauty and secrets, and every yard hiked feels like the most wonderful discovery.

I lift my gaze. Farther up the ridge is another tower, and the wall continues along in a thin, unbroken line far into the distance until it eventually disappears behind a hill and completely out of sight.



CATHERINE HAMM, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

Ulupo Heiau in Kailua on windward Oahu is hard to find, but rewarding for the intrepid traveler. The stone formations once stood 30 feet high and provided the base for a temple.

Shrouded in mystery, history

Secluded temple on Oahu holds clues to a rich culture

BY CATHERINE HAMM
Los Angeles Times

It was like a watercolor dream, blurry at the edges, filled with jungle greens and cerulean sky. It was quiet and lush in a way that only

Hawaii can be. Was this place real, or had I dreamed it? After all, it had been more than 50 years since I first saw it, and more than three decades since I last laid eyes on this heiau, a Hawaiian temple in the windward Oahu town where I once lived.

But where was it? It's a state park, so surely I could find it easily, although given my map dysfunction, "easily" was a tad optimistic.

As I drove through residential areas off Kailua Road, I grew more frustrated. Where was Ulupo Heiau?

Back, well hidden a short distance from the YMCA.

On a warm Sunday afternoon in September, I wandered down a path that took me to the base of the temple, about 180 feet long by 140 feet wide and, at one time, as many as 30 feet tall. My jaw dropped, the same reaction that overwhelmed me at Mexico's Teotihuacan pyramids or the structures of Peru's Machu Picchu.

Although a plaque placed in 1962 credits menehune, Hawaii's small people said to be possessed of magical powers, with the creation of this heiau, it was more likely hard-working Hawaiians who passed the basalt rock hand over hand from west Oahu — about 10 miles away, said Kalam Kaanaana, director of Hawaiian cultural affairs for the Hawaii Tourism Authority.

And, once again, I was in thrall of humanity's desire to create something that defies time but dismayed by that same humanity's desire to destroy what it does not understand or accept.

Heiaus are sacred sites and should be ap-

proached just as you would a great cathedral. The gilt that adorns those grand places of worship is here too, but it is the nature that is the gold: the sound of songbirds (some of which are returning to Ulupo after a long absence, Kaanaana said), the flit of a butterfly, a gentle breeze that rustles the greenery.

It is a place that encourages quiet and contemplation to envision what it once was.

It dates back more than half a century, and was originally agricultural in nature. Taro (kalo is the Hawaiian word), a staple, bananas, sweet potatoes and sugar cane were among the crops grown.

Today, taro again is being grown as the land has been reclaimed from years of overgrowth.

But nature is not to blame for the destruction of temples.

Kamehameha, who would ultimately become king of Hawaii, won one of the most important battles in his fight to unify the islands in 1795 at Nuuanu Pali, whose peaks you might pass if you come here from Waikiki. By 1810, the islands were as one.

Kamehameha had help in his quest to defeat his enemies, thanks to munitions from Europeans.

In the ensuing decades, white settlers increasingly undermined and depleted the power of the Hawaiian monarchy, and the culture and religious practices of its people.

It is possible that Ulupo was abandoned by the time Kamehameha won the battle for Oahu. It is thought there were two other heiaus in Kailua, but they are lost to time.

There are others on Oahu where history and meaning are clearer, including Puu o Mahuka Heiau, which overlooks Waimea Bay and is said to be the largest on Oahu.

But Ulupo is special, perhaps because it was once near home, because its past was once ignored and now is being preserved.



ANNA HARTLEY/For The Washington Post

The more popular Great Wall sites receive millions of visitors per year. In others, nature has overtaken the structure.

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific



On a recent trip to the Maldives, my itinerary was planned around a single hotel amenity: a bungalow with a two-story waterside. In the luxury-friendly Maldives, more than anywhere else on Earth, it's extravagant design features rather than location or good restaurants that make a hotel.

Enter Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, with the region's first underwater bungalow. When it opens late this year, the Muraka ("coral" in Dhivehi, the local language) will have cost \$15 million to build, and the experience of sleeping 16.4 feet below sea level can be yours beginning at \$50,000 per night before taxes.

"The Muraka promises a unique experience that is not available anywhere else in the world," architect Ahmed Saleem explains. While it's true that there aren't many hotel beds suspended below sea level, encased in glassy tunnels and surrounded by tropical fish, Saleem was more concerned with creating a full experience than designing a single, iconic room.

So guests to the Maldives — an archipelago in the Indian Sea, southwest of India — will be flown to a private seaplane jetty and picked up in a speedboat for their ensuing use. The suite itself is set apart from the Conrad's beach villas and bungalows so its residents don't have to see other humans — or set foot on dry land — if they don't want to. The price includes four dedicated butlers in a nearby structure for round-the-clock service, a chef, a set of jet skis and an on-call fitness trainer. Guests are upgraded to Diamond Honors Hilton status and given a 90-minute spa treatment per day.

The structure itself is made of steel, concrete and acrylic, with one level above the water and another below. It's more castle than hotel suite, with enough nooks and crannies to sleep nine guests plus a gym, butler's quarters and space for a private security detail.

The top floor has two bedrooms, a bathroom with an ocean-view tub, a sunset-facing deck and an infinity-edge pool. Guests can descend below sea level down a spiral staircase or elevator. There, nothing but a curved acrylic dome separates the king-sized bedroom and living area from the reef just beyond. The bathroom, with its see-through walls and ceiling, feels like a bona-fide fishbowl. But privacy isn't an

issue, unless fish make you feel shy; the villa is far from the rest of the resort. The deep underwater darkness — or simply feeling lost at sea — might be more unsettling.

Creating a self-contained island residence with undersea sleeping quarters is challenging, at best. Conrad Maldives Rangali Island has experience in that architectural arena thanks to Ithaa ("mother-of-pearl"), its underwater restaurant where diners enjoy eight-course feasts below a see-through, acrylic canopy.

Still, Saleem says, "Designing an undersea structure such as Ithaa and designing a sleeping and living experience is vastly different." Among his main concerns was safety. The restaurant, he says, is in shallow waters and always fully staffed; evacuating from the Muraka in the event of an emergency may have to happen unattended. A sophisticated air-quality monitoring and alarm system will help; so will safety instruction briefings like the ones on airplanes.

The project's scope presented logistical concerns. Saleem had to devise a lighting and design scheme that wouldn't reflect off the acrylic walls. "We couldn't use bright colors or variations of white, as that would reflect too much and impede the undersea experience," he says. He had to work with marine biologists to ensure the villa wouldn't affect the surrounding corals. Then the 600-ton structure had to be built on land in Singapore, hoisted onto a crane, and transported in a specialized ship that could moor near the reef and submerge the suite.

Even in the Maldives, whose resorts are known to command some of the highest prices globally, this type of building isn't sustainable as anything more than a one-off. "There are no immediate plans to create additional undersea residences at this point," Saleem says.

To Martin Rinck, who oversees Hilton's global luxury and lifestyle brands including Conrad, the debut of the underwater villa is a way to stay ahead of the industry. It's "a perfect example of the out-of-the-box thinking that meets guests' demands before they even have them," Rinck says.

Nowhere is it more important to drive these types of trends than in the Maldives, where nearly a dozen ultra-luxe hotels will open this year. "The Maldives is a destination where guests expect the best," Rinck says.

UNDERWATER ESCAPE

The Conrad Maldives Rangali Island's undersea bungalow will sit 16 feet below the surface of the Indian Ocean

By NIKKI EKSTEIN • *Bloomberg*



WEEKEND: TRAVEL

The Force is strong in this desert

History, culture alive at Tunisian set location from first Star Wars film

By CAIN BURDEAU
Associated Press

There's a reason the original Star Wars movie was filmed in the deserts of southern Tunisia. This stark, remote landscape looks like another planet.

One of Tunisia's vast desert regions is even called Tataouine, like Luke Skywalker's home planet, Tatooine.

And the underground home where Luke Skywalker first appeared living with his uncle and aunt is a real hotel in the town of Matmata, one of various desert locations used in the movies.

"It looks just like the film," said Lorenzo Bresciani, one of two young touring Italian professional tennis players who recently visited the Hotel Sidi Driss. "When you see it on the film, you say, 'OK.' But when you are here, it has another effect."

Hotel owner Masoud Berachad says visitors have dropped off since Tunisia's democratic revolution in 2011 and since terrorist attacks killed tourists in 2015.

Still, Star Wars fans keep the hotel in business. "They come and take so many pictures," Berachad said. "You can see how happy they are. They can stay here for hours and hours."

Aside from tourism, though, jobs here are scarce. Matmata's population is dwindling as people leave for a more modern life elsewhere.



PHOTOS BY CAIN BURDEAU/AP

Tourists stroll around an abandoned "Star Wars" film location where vendors sell crafts and other items in the Sahara Desert near Tozeur in southern Tunisia.



Masoud Berachad is the owner of the Hotel Sidi Driss, which served as Luke Skywalker's home in the original Star Wars.

The Berbers

Before becoming a hotel in 1969, the Star Wars dwelling was a traditional home used by indigenous Berbers. The Berbers played a major role in the history of North Africa and Europe after forming powerful alliances with Romans and Arabs. Remember the Jawas from Star Wars, the hooded fellows who trade in scrap metal and capture C-3PO and R2-D2? Their dark cloaks and pointed

hoods resemble the garments of traditional Berbers, as does Obi-Wan Kenobi in his cloak.

The Berbers' underground dwellings, like the Matmata house, were carved from sandstone to offer shelter from heat and a place to hide from enemies. Few people live that way today, but some dwellings have been preserved as museums, including one owned by Mahboub Theouibi, whose family moved into a modern house about 25 years ago.

Like most of the dwellings, theirs was built with a central courtyard open to the sky. "Brothers lived in the same room, cousins in another," she said. "Each room had a purpose." She pointed to a small room accessible only by ladder, where the family stored food, and a stone for milling grains. "Everything was made by hand," she said.

She remembered her life there fondly, despite hardships like carrying water by camel from a spring far away and the daily search for food.

A desert journey

It's a long journey across wide-open plateaus to this desert terrain. Long, straight highways pass industrial cities such as oil-rich Gabes and phosphate-producing Gafsa. Vendors by the roadside sell tea boiled in fire-warmed pots,

pastries and beautiful ceramics. Stacks of jerry cans hold cheap gas smuggled in from neighboring Algeria and Libya. In lonely-looking and half-finished towns along the way, the only businesses seem to be coffee shops filled with men smoking hookahs and playing cards.

A jumble of walls and stone homes mark a Berber town on a hill called Tammezret. Here Mongi Bouras, a 50-year-old Berber artisan, has meticulously turned an old cave home into a museum to showcase his people's history.

His museum is filled with his gorgeous traditional artwork, all handmade: dresses, quilts, carpets, mannequins adorned in traditional clothing. It's also full of tools and objects that would have been found in a Berber home, like pestles and the two-handled jars called amphorae.

He said animistic, Jewish, Christian and Muslim symbols became part of Berber crafts and patterns, and his work reflects that: In his laboriously woven garments and carpets there is a Star of David, a Christian cross, an Islamic crescent moon and naturalistic representations.

The low doorways, he said, forced visitors to bow out of courtesy. In one room, he lifted a colorful carpet to reveal a wooden door in the floor. This used to be the entrance to a 1-kilometer-deep tunnel once used by inhabitants to get water, their path lit by oil lamps. "The sign of the smoke from olive oil is still there," he said.

An abandoned film set

Farther on, the Sahara gets closer. The horizons stretch longer. Traffic is sparse. Mountain profiles etch the landscape.

Out of nowhere, a town appears: Douz. A restaurant menu lists camel's milk, lamb's head and grilled fish trucked in from the Mediterranean. Another city on the edge of the Sahara, Tozeur, is busy with shops, lit-up mosques, cafes, markets, traffic.

Then, just outside Tozeur, a bizarre sight appears over the top of a sand dune: an abandoned film set from another Star Wars location, a place called Mos Espa in the films. Vendors sell crafts and pushy boys try to get tourists to pose for photographs atop camels or with long-eared desert foxes.

As the sun falls, the dunes and desert take on strange shapes and colors. It's as if they truly belong on another planet.

"Star Wars" filming locations are scattered throughout Tunisia. In an effort to attract tourists, residents have decorated these sites with memorabilia from the 1977 film.



WEEKEND: MUSIC



Bucking the system

Nashville still presents challenges for rising country stars Brothers Osborne

By EMILY YARR
The Washington Post

For proof that Brothers Osborne do things differently than most country stars, look no further than their music video for last year's hit single, "It Ain't My Fault." The video, a tribute to the 1991 movie "Point Break," features robbers wearing presidential masks on a heist. The one wearing the Donald Trump mask tries to steal from a church collection plate, and the one who looks like Bill Clinton ogles an attractive woman.

While not scathing commentary, the fact that it touches on politics is unusual; that's something most Nashville singers desperately try to avoid. But John and TJ Osborne, the affable sibling duo raised near the Chesapeake Bay in Deale, Md., don't mind addressing controversial topics — they're the rare

breakout country act whose career seems to pick up steam when they take risks.

On April 20, they released their sophomore album, "Port Saint Joe." It lands after much critical acclaim and two Grammy nominations for their 2016 certified gold debut record, "Pawn Shop," which spawned four hits. On April 15, "It Ain't My Fault" won music video of the year at the Academy of Country Music Awards, the same prize it picked up at the Country Music Association Awards in the fall.

"We tried to ruin our career, and we won two awards," joked John, 35. Sure, they occasionally receive threats of being "Dixie Chicked," or black-listed from the industry, when they bluntly discuss politics. However, they also see positive feedback. "The fact that we can put out a political satire video and gain fans from it, that shows people want to see (someone) tackle these subjects."

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Brothers Osborne

Port Saint Joe (EMI Nashville)

"Port Saint Joe" might only be the Brothers Osborne's second album, but T.J. and John Osborne have already established a sound all their own.

T.J.'s warm baritone has only grown more inviting since the duo's Grammy-nominated debut "Pawn Shop," showcased on the spare, but swaggering, opener "Slow Your Roll" and the wistful country waltz "Tequila Again." John Osborne's virtuoso guitar work has developed as well, whether it's on a big solo like the Allman Brothers-influenced one he reels off in "Shoot Me Straight" or on a pretty acoustic number like "While You Still Can."

When the Brothers Osborne put those two stunning talents together, as they do on the epic "Shoot Me Straight" or the poignant ballad "I Don't Remember Me (Before You)," as John's lilting guitar plays off T.J.'s gruffness, it shows why they are among country's fastest-rising stars. They balance the intense moments with some good-time anthems like "Weed, Whiskey and Willie" and "Drank Like Hank," but even those have a lyrical depth that sets them apart from the country mainstream. "Port Saint Joe" is sure to rack up more hits and more awards for the Brothers Osborne.



— Glenn Gamboa
Newsday

TJ, left, and John Osborne released their second album, "Port Saint Joe," on April 20.

ALYSSA GAFKIN/Courtesy of Q Prime

WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS



**Old Crow
Medicine Show**
Volunteer (Columbia Nashville)

Photo courtesy of All Eyes Media

The rollicking show rolls on for Old Crow

Old Crow Medicine Show has produced some of the most original American music of the past two decades. Now comes "Volunteer," a new collection that combines the band's familiar buskers-on-steroids vibe with some of the best songwriting its members have ever done.

Old Crow has always shone brightest as a live band, and its amped-up shows are hard to replicate in the studio. Some of what it does is a lot like American blues, wherein the energy drawn from an audience doesn't

translate well to recording. That's true here on lickety-split numbers like "Flicker and Shine" and "Shout Mountain Music," which almost certainly sound better live but feel caged in somehow here.

The album's biggest misstep is a barge of a song called "Child of the Mississippi," which sinks from the weight of its own clichés, muddy water gonna carry me home and all.

But the band reaches for greatness elsewhere. It does its best work on four majestic ballads: "Old Hickory," "Homecoming Party," "Whirlwind" and "Look Away."

The latter, written by bandleader Ketch Secor, is a clear-eyed love song to the American South, flaws and all. Secor's elegant fiddle-playing pays homage to Ken Burns' "Civil War" soundtrack in all the right ways, accentuating Secor's passion for a land "where a man and a mule don't look much different to the boss man's scales."

It's a nuanced testimonial to a complex region from a great American band that only seems to be getting better.

— Scott Stroud
Associated Press

FROM PAGE 36

It helps that the brothers were underdogs for so long that it feels like they have nothing to lose, as it took years of songwriting and touring before they broke through in Nashville with a sound that strays from the pop-leaning intricacies of country radio. That attitude fueled the thinking for choosing "Shoot Me Straight," featuring their signature jolt of high-energy Southern rock, as the first single off their new record. At more than six minutes long, "everything about it said it shouldn't be the single," said TJ, 33.

"We could have put out a song we thought was a bit safer — or keep the message of 'We're going to keep doing our thing despite the odds and the formula and what we're 'supposed' to do,'" John said. "We wanted the statement off our first single to be, 'This is our band. We are different.'"

While that mind-set wins them fans, it can still be risky in Nashville. Just because you break through as rising stars doesn't mean everything afterward is smooth sailing, especially when you refuse to compromise your artistic vision.

"Things are starting to become easier for us, but we're still working as hard as we did when we put our first single out," TJ said, adding they still have times "struggling at radio, or fighting to get on award shows."

The latter might surprise fans who frequently see the brothers on televised ceremonies. Yet they didn't perform at the ACM Awards, even though they were in attendance and won for video and vocal duo of the year.

When asked about their absence from the stage, which raised questions from viewers on social media, TJ called it "a little frustrating how it all played out."



UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP/The Washington Post

John Osborne, left, and TJ Osborne, center, grew up in Maryland before moving to Nashville, and their underdog attitude has served them well in Music City.

Originally, John said, they had a "lot of things lined up, a cool slot" but then — for reasons unknown to them — they kept getting "squeezed out" until they were offered a very short performance slot. By then, they felt it didn't make sense to play at all. (The ACMs did not respond to a request for comment.)

In addition, both of the awards they won were in categories not featured on the broadcast, and only presented on the nontelevised red carpet. When that happened, "it was hard not to feel shunned a little," TJ said. Incidentally, they tied with Chris Stapleton and Miranda Lambert for the most awards of the night.

"For them to pull the televised award

just days before the airing of the show was another kind of punch in the gut," John said. "But at the end of the day, we have two awards from that show, and they were given to us by our peers. That is something we're forever grateful for."

They are indeed beloved by quite a few in the industry, as many have found them a refreshing antidote to the "bro country" phase that took over Nashville for several years. "Port Saint Joe," named after the beachfront area in Florida where they recorded the album with producer Jay Joyce, sounds like a natural complement to "Pawn Shop." While the first record's themes established they would never forget their blue-collar roots growing up

in a small fishing town in Maryland, the second establishes a band confident in its tone.

Collaborating with some of Nashville's top songwriters, and leaning into TJ's deep baritone and John's killer guitar skills, they go from hard-charging rock ("Slow Your Roll," "Drank Like Hank" to the laid-back ("Weed, Whiskey & Willie," "A Couple Wrongs Makin' It Alright").

TJ said he's proud the record is "more mature" and shows how they've evolved since their first album; this is evident particularly on tracks like the pensive "I Don't Remember (Me Before You)" and "Pushing Up Daisies (Love Alive)." One standout is "While You Still Can," a quiet yet urgent song about appreciating time with loved ones.

The duo performed it on Bobby Bones' syndicated morning radio show in October after the Route 91 Harvest festival in Las Vegas, where 58 concertgoers were killed in the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history. The brothers had performed at the festival two days before the massacre. When playing the song on the radio show (with lyrics including "Cause everything you thought would last forever, never lasts forever like you planned"), John started crying and couldn't get through it.

Moments like that set Brothers Osborne apart, as they were also one of the few country acts to talk about gun control after the tragedy.

"We were raised that way, to be respectful and kind to people first and foremost, but to stand up for what we believe in and be vocal," John said. After all, they would rather stay true to their beliefs than worry about potential career impact. "At the end of the day ... when I look in the mirror, I know I spoke up and said something."

WEEKEND: BOOKS

UK royal biographer talks Markle, Simpson

By ROXANNE ROBERTS
The Washington Post

British journalist Andrew Morton became a household name in 1992 with the publication of "Diana: Her True Story," the sensational tell-all about Princess Di and her marriage to Prince Charles. Since then, he's become one of the leading experts on the British royal family and other celebrities.

This year, his focus is on two American women: Wallis Warfield Simpson and Meghan Markle. "Wallis in Love: The Untold Life of the Duchess of Windsor, the Woman Who Changed the Monarchy," which came out in February, tells the story of the twice-divorced Simpson, who was at the center of a worldwide scandal when King Edward VIII abdicated the throne in 1936 to be with "the woman I love."

Eight decades after that controversy, Markle is set to marry Prince Harry next month. "Meghan: A Hollywood Princess," his unauthorized biography of her, was released April 17.

We caught up with him during a whirlwind book tour in New York to talk about the two women.

The Washington Post: Aside from the fact that Wallis and Meghan are both born in America and both divorced, are there any other similarities?



Morton: I think that the other similarity is their ability to network. Wallis started her cocktail parties in London, inviting diplomats, journalists, business people — mainly American — and got to know more people, she got to hear the gossip, and she got to

step up the social ladder a few rungs. And I find the modern version of a cocktail party is a blog. Megan started her blog (in the '00s), started her Instagram and did so in order to give her views on serious matters such as gender equality — but also to create a following and meet famous people. So she was a networker the same way Wallis was a networker, but using different tools to achieve those aims.

You write that Wallis wanted to be queen and, after the abdication,

desperately wanted to be called "Her Royal Highness" — which never happened. Meghan is more interested in becoming "Diana 2.0."

I don't know if Meghan will appreciate "Her Royal Highness" — which she is going to be called — as much as Wallis would have done. Because in those days, hierarchy, place and position was much more significant than it is today. Wallis was very focused on title and position. I don't think Meghan has given it as much thought and consideration simply because it's not part of her intellectual lexicon.

Meghan's never going to be queen — Harry will soon be sixth in line for the throne — but she's marrying one of the most eligible bachelors in the world and becoming a princess. The whole thing has a certain fairy-tale aspect.

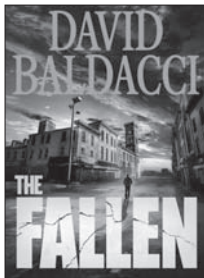
One of my favorite films is "Sliding Doors," and I'm a great believer that this whole affair is "Sliding Doors." If she hadn't been in London for those few days, if there hadn't been a blind date — it was just, as Prince Harry says, that the stars were aligned. I really think that fate intervened in a bizarre, kind of unknowable way. **How well do you think Harry and**

Megan are suited for each other?

He's always had girlfriends who are slightly out of the norm. I mean, Chelsy Davy was from Zimbabwe, Cressida Bonas was an actress ... He's never gone for English Roses. And Meghan is, in many respects, perfect for him because — as he said himself — she makes him up his game.

Do you think she's suited to be a royal wife?

In many respects, she's very well-suited. She moves the younger generation of the royal family on a bit. She's eloquent, she's articulate, she's got humanitarian work under her belt. She has a focused and defined worldview. I find it a fascinating adventure not just for Harry and Meghan but also for the royal family. As Edward VIII himself said, royal work can be very boring and very mundane. Meghan was leading a very gilded life — face of a Canadian retailer, ambassador for a charity, photo shoots here, chat shows there. She's had to give all that up, and for what? For royal walkabouts, which is like doing the red carpet without the red carpet and talking to total strangers about the weather.



The Fallen
David Baldacci

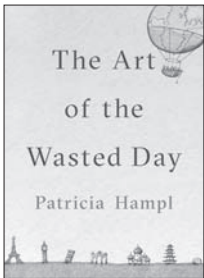
Amos Decker, who had a terrible head injury while playing football, can recall all of his memories to the slightest detail. He now works with the FBI. He's on vacation with his partner, Alex Jamison, who wants to visit her sister in Pennsylvania. Things go wrong almost immediately.

The small town of Baronville is struggling to survive now that the mill has closed and mining has dried up. Opioid addiction has almost crippled the town as well. The first evening of their visit, Amos witnesses something unusual in the house next door and ends up stumbling onto the site of a double homicide.

These murders are only the latest in a string of several. Amos looks over the clues and attempts to decipher a pattern. When he and Alex are almost killed, Amos realizes that his memory is now somewhat fuzzy.

Baldacci is a wonderful storyteller, and he incorporates wonderful characters into baffling conspiracies. He takes on small-town America, capturing both good and bad elements, and demonstrates why these small towns are worth saving.

— Jeff Ayers/AP



The Art of the Wasted Day
Patricia Hampel

Hampel examines people's need to constantly add to the to-do list as real life passes them by. Will a time of personal tranquility ever be considered equally as important as the daily grind?

Hampel suggests that the American Dream is built on a life that thrives. The most convincing piece of evidence is written in the Declaration of Independence.

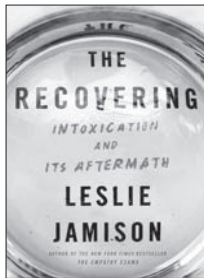
The founding fathers placed "the pursuit of happiness" as a foundational mandate of how Americans should approach long-standing goals. The juxtaposition between striving to be happy versus just being happy is what sent Hampel on an adventure to figure out the art of leisure.

Is a solitary life one that stays home? Or does it involve adventure to figure out what makes you happy?

Hampel weaves personal stories throughout the course of the book as she travels to the homes of individuals who were famously known for seclusion. She visits Bordeaux, Wales, Moravia, and cruises down the Mississippi.

Hampel paints a meticulous picture in each essay.

— Lincee Ray/AP



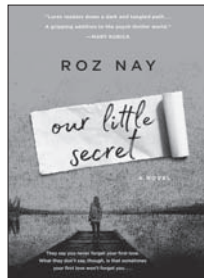
The Recovering
Leslie Jamison

In tandem to the author's account of her own spiral into alcoholism, she meticulously examines the lives and work of writers who inspire her, exposing the turmoil of addiction plaguing Raymond Carver, Billie Holiday, David Foster Wallace and more. She unpacks America's long relationship with addicts and lastly tells the stories of the biker, the nurse and countless others occupying the folding chairs in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

Jamison's exploration of how culture impacts the direction that addiction takes people is, while not new, framed in a nuanced context, giving new breath and voice to an old problem. The author's own alcohol dependence led her to a church basement where she received coffee, a sponsor and endless encouragement. Meanwhile, her non-white countryside family found the substance abuse to federal penitentiaries.

Jamison lays bare the myths surrounding artists and addiction. She digs deeply into the mythical cloud billowing around writers and what's in their glass, proving that sobriety is a creative force to be lauded.

— Christina Ledbetter/AP



Our Little Secret
Roz Nay

Ten years ago, in the little town of Cove, Vt., a quiet girl named Angela Pettifey fell in love with the dashing captain of the high school swim team. Now, Angela stews in the local police station, stonewalling a series of grim detectives who want to know if she can explain why her first love's wife, Saskia, has gone missing.

Their questions suggest they have a list of preconceptions they are trying to check off. This, Angela is certain, is no way to get at the truth.

Finally, when Detective Novak takes a turn, Angela asks: "Do you really want to know what happened?" He does, so over the next 255 pages, she tells him — everything.

"Our Little Secret," a debut novel by Nay, superficially resembles Paula Hawkins' "The Girl on the Train" and similar psychological thrillers that have stormed the best-seller lists in the past decade. But Nay's work transcends the subgenre. The plot is more textured and heart-breaking, and her prose contains startling turns of phrase that reveal the soul of a poet.

— Bruce DeSilva/AP



And Now We Have Everything
Meaghan O'Connell

O'Connell was an idealistic 20-something, living and working in New York City and engaged to her boyfriend of a couple of years. They had big plans to travel the world after their nuptials. O'Connell wanted to write a novel.

One day she started feeling a little funny. So she took a pregnancy test. It came back positive. Do we have enough money for daycare? Will our relationship and careers suffer once the baby is here? Will I get the epidural?

The book is funny and sarcastic, and readers will appreciate O'Connell's passion on the subject, which is evident in the prose.

— Tracee M. Herbaugh/AP

WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

"Zombies": Following in the steps of the massively popular "Descendants" comes this production from Disney. The music- and dance-filled story looks at a semester at Seabrook High School where students from nearby Zombietown are integrated into the school. Humans and zombies must find a way to get along. Addison (Meg Donnelly) is a freshman who dreams of being a cheerleader, but that changes when she meets Zed (Milo Manheim), a charismatic zombie determined to play football for the Mighty Shrimp, a team that desperately needs a win. The flak Addison takes for befriending a zombie changes when they start winning games. The film combines a strong lineup of songs with very impressive dancing. When these two elements have clicked this well in other Disney musicals aimed at younger viewers — such as "High School Musical" — the results have been a hit. For a show that deals with the walking dead, there is a lot of life in the production.

"Grease": It has been 40 years since John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John sang and danced their way through the corridors of Rydell High, but their efforts are as entertaining today as they were four decades ago. There's been plenty of time to second-guess the selection of the film's two stars, but each viewing only fortifies the argument they were the best selections. Another big reason the production is so strong is the lineup of musical hits that include "Greased Lightnin'," "Look At Me, I'm Sandra Dee," "Summer Nights," "Hopelessly Devoted To You," "Beauty School Dropout" and "Grease." One or two hits would be a win for any musical, but this one is loaded. The film has been available for years and plays on cable regularly. The anniversary edition offers more because both the 4K Ultra HD and Blu-ray combo packs also feature more than an hour of previously released bonus material including a singalong, interviews with the cast, deleted scenes and more. Plus, the Blu-ray combo comes in a collectible packaging with 16 pages of images laid out like a high school yearbook. If that's not enough, Paramount worked with director Randal Kleiser to restore the film to its original vibrancy with the highest quality sound, picture resolution and color.

Also out on DVD:

"Doctor Detroit": A mild-mannered professor (Dan Aykroyd) must pretend to be a cold-hearted criminal.

"Paddington 2": Paddington must recover a stolen item that is to be a special present.

"Shameless: Season Eight": William H. Macy continues to play Frank Gallagher, an alcoholic single father of six children living in Chicago.

"Maze Runner: The Death Cure": Thomas leads his group of escaped Gladers on their final mission.

"Hostiles": An Army captain (Christian Bale) must safely transport a Cheyenne chief through a contested territory. — Rick Bentley/Tribune News Service



ENTERTAINMENT STUDIOS MOTION PICTURES/AP
Rosamund Pike, left, and Christian Bale star in the recent DVD release "Hostiles."



Foot-in-mouth moment

'Superstore's' Lauren Ash recalls embarrassing herself

Lauren Ash stars as Dina on "Superstore." The show airs Fridays on AFN-Prime.

By MINA NETZ
Chicago Tribune

As assistant manager of Cloud 9, the fictional big box chain in NBC's "Superstore," Dina is intense. As played by Lauren Ash, the character's take no prisoners approach to the job is a consistently funny riff on the overbearing manager.

Ash's comedic talent was honed as a sketch and improv performer. Ten years ago the Canadian native was a standout on Second City's mainstage in Chicago, where the cast members are also the writers of their shows. Ash is leveraging that skill on the NBC sitcom, as well.

"On a whim I just asked if I could write an episode and submitted a sample script," she said. "I didn't hear back and wasn't really expecting to. Then I got a message from our showrunner who was like, 'Hey, do you want to write an episode towards the end of the season?' So I went to work in the writers room and I was there for the whole process of breaking the story and all that. We just finished shooting it." She couldn't reveal much about the episode itself, but said it should air sometime in May. "If nothing changes it will be Episode 20 this season."

When asked to share a worst moment for this column, it was her first movie role that came to mind: "I think my favorite story is from back in 2006-ish. I was fairly new to the Second City mainstage in Toronto (where she performed before coming to Chicago) and I booked a small part in a feature film called 'Lars and the Real Girl' which stars Ryan Gosling. This was exciting! Ryan Gosling is Canada's sweetheart!"

As she would soon learn, if you're going to embarrass yourself on a film set, it might as well be in front of Canada's sweetheart.

My worst moment

"I played a co-worker of Lars', which is who Ryan Gosling was playing. His character is very socially awkward and if you haven't seen the movie, he has fallen in love with this life-size doll. We got a very firm talking to when we got to the

set. Don't look the doll in the eye. Don't make fun of the doll. Don't talk to the doll. It was very surreal.

"Keep in mind, Ryan Gosling is a really serious Method actor, so he does not drop character at all. It's the first morning, the first rehearsal, we're all on set and he comes in and he's in character but nobody really knows because we've never had any interactions with him before this. We hadn't even seen him yet. So the energy in the room is weird — it's like the elephant in the room, interacting with somebody who's Ryan Gosling but not Ryan Gosling. Like, how do you deal with this?"

"Anyway, when I got to set I realize I know a lot of the other actors, because this thing is shooting in Canada and it's a quirky indie comedy, so they've cast a lot of Second City people in smaller parts. And one of them was Aurora Browne, who I knew a little bit, and I'm like, 'Great, I have a buddy.' It's awkward being on a film set and at this point in my career I didn't have a lot of experience. So I thought, 'This is great; I'm not alone.'"

"We rehearse the scene. Everything's fine. But it's also super exciting because it's Ryan Gosling! And he's also really beautiful. (Laughs) So the rehearsal ends, they're setting up the lights and we go back to our trailers. Aurora and I are walking beside each other and both just brimming with wanting to talk about, 'Oh my God, it's Ryan Gosling and he's so cute!' He ... was still super hot.

"So she starts going on about, 'I can't believe how hot he is...' And as she's talking to me, I kind of turn my head over my shoulder and I see that he's walking in the same direction, coming up behind us — and he's close enough that he's able to hear what we're saying.

"I wanted to try to alert her but I also didn't want to say anything because he was right behind us and she would hear me! So my instinct is to speed up, start walking ... and hopefully she will match my gait and then we can get far enough away that I can give her a signal of some kind.

"So I start to speed up but she doesn't take the hint. Now I was a full two feet ahead of her and she starts talking louder to me. And I'm like, 'Oh no, this is going

horribly wrong.' He was two steps behind her at this point. There's no way he couldn't hear her.

"And as I'm walking, I see a door. And with all my force, I burst through the door to get us out of this situation that she doesn't even know she's in — but it's still door, not a push door. And I hit the side of my face by force into this closed door and knock the wind out of myself. I sort of crumple and I couldn't really breathe for a second. (Laughs) Aurora was like, 'Oh my God, are you OK? What just happened?'"

"And then I look and Gosling is behind her — bless him — very politely, very Canadianly laughing at me! Just like giggling and trying to hide that he's laughing at me."

What was going through her mind as Gosling was laughing? "First of all I thought: You have to communicate that you're OK because you don't want him to go into oh-my-God-let-me-help-you mode. I didn't want him thinking, 'This woman has injured herself' even though I had badly hit my shoulder.

"I think immediately I just started going, 'I'm OK! I'm fine! Pull-not-push, what are the chances?' It was just verbal diarrhea. Trying to overcompensate and think, 'Get me out of here!' Also ... we still had to go back and shoot that scene! I still have three other days on this movie and now I'm the girl that ran into the door! That's what he's going to think every day when he sees me. But he was a consummate professional; he never mentioned it."

The takeaway

"Oh gosh, listen, my Canadianism will always be the death of me. And me trying so hard to protect Aurora from embarrassing herself caused me literal physical pain — so maybe just let the person dig their own grave. That's a life lesson for me. Don't be so worried about helping others not embarrass themselves because, at the end of the day, you'll end up embarrassing yourself far worse!"

"And it is really so bad that Ryan Gosling overhears an actress say that he's beautiful! Oh, now he knows she thinks him hot! Everybody thinks he's hot, this is not news to Ryan Gosling."

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS



COMMENTARY

Just what the doctor ordered?

A physician wonders whether exercise prescriptions make patients healthier

By RANIT MISHORI

Special to The Washington Post

About a decade ago, a colleague told me about a cool new initiative, something called “Exercise Is Medicine.” The idea made total sense to me: Rather than just tell my patients about exercising, I would hand them an actual prescription for exercise, just like the ones I give patients for high blood pressure or diabetes. The thinking behind it was that an official “doctor’s order” for exercise, in the form of a prescription-pad-style piece of paper, would be taken more seriously by patients than a mere suggestion.

I quickly started giving out these prescriptions, going so far as to find some official-looking templates online and printing them out. I wrote out “dosages” based on each patient’s age and medical condition, and relying on evidence-based recommendations.

The social prescribing trend focuses not only on food, exercise and housing, but also on “softer” activities such as making art, singing, participation in social gatherings — and their presumptive benefits on well-being and social connectedness.

For example, for a person with diabetes, I might write a prescription that says:

- Frequency: At least 3-4 days a week.
- Intensity: Exercise at a moderate level.
- Time: Exercise 30-60 minutes per day (all at once, or break it up into a few sessions of at least 10 minutes each).
- Type: Aerobic or rhythmic exercises using the large muscle groups (walking, cycling, swimming). Weights 2x week.

We physicians often don’t have time during a typical office visit of 15 or 20 minutes to discuss lifestyle-related recommendations for improving health. Many of us tell patients, “You need to lose weight” or “stop smoking” or “exercise more” — but in practice we tend to skimp on the details. The exercise-prescription idea was supposed to help eliminate this vagueness by giving patients more-specific information to act on.

Many doctors have now expanded the prescription approach for exercise to a whole range of behaviors and activities associated with a healthy lifestyle. The assumption is that if the prescription pad can get more people exercising, then maybe it could also get patients doing other activities — dance lessons or an art class or a stroll in the park — that have been found to improve physical and mental health. In fact, over the past couple of years, such prescribing efforts have really taken off:

- Physicians in Vermont, for example, have been giving out prescriptions for hiking and, in general, spending

time in nature. That idea’s getting picked up elsewhere, including South Dakota, Maine, California and New Mexico, and is supported by multiple studies showing that people who spend time outdoors see improvement in mood, energy, stress and general well-being, as well as some aspects of physical health.

■ The American Academy of Pediatrics has launched the Park Rx Initiative, with the idea of helping doctors prescribe “nature during the routine delivery of health care” by, among other things, showing them parks close to where their patients live.

■ Prescription programs for healthy eating have popped up in more than a dozen states, championed by hospitals and physicians’ offices, as a means of battling diabetes, obesity and other conditions associated with nutrition. For example, a Chicago program called Food Rx pairs “doctor’s orders” with food coupons and information about community resources.

■ In Hawaii, state lawmakers last year considered a bill to classify homelessness as a medical condition — multiple studies have documented the link between homelessness, poorer health and —

Such interventions are known as “social prescribing,” in which health-care professionals are asked to identify and recommend interventions outside the exam room or hospital that might help patients adopt healthier lifestyles.

These efforts highlight what are called the social determinants of health and the recognition that social factors — including where you live, what you eat, how active you are, your access to health care, your income level, etc. — can be more important to your health than medical factors such as genetics.

Addressing these social determinants, studies have shown, may, in fact, be more effective in managing chronic conditions and prolonging life than medications and other clinical interventions.

The social prescribing trend focuses not only on food, exercise and housing, but also on “softer” activities such as making art, singing, participation in social gatherings — and their presumptive benefits on well-being and social connectedness. That’s because loneliness is also increasingly being thought of as a social determinant of health that is linked to physical- and mental-health conditions and even early death.

In Britain, social prescribing is sanctioned by the National Health Service and is being embraced by primary-care physicians who send their patients to com-

munity-based organizations and activities in response to an increase in lifestyle-associated conditions (including diabetes, obesity, heart disease) and social isolation.

Isolation is rising in Europe. Can loneliness ministers help change that?

Research has shown that such interventions are helpful, some more than others. There is irrefutable data showing that exercise is good for you, regardless of your age, gender, physical abilities or medical conditions. And there is beginning to be more robust evidence for benefits from spending time in nature, dancing, singing, engaging socially and keeping your brain active.

And yet, as I consider the science, I ask myself: Does the act of actually prescribing these activities make a difference in patients’ lives? Are they more likely to act on these recommendations when packaged as an official-looking Rx?

The evidence on that is less clear. The literature on writing prescriptions for exercise shows that it may help more doctors discuss and recommend exercise (which is, of course, a good thing). But evidence that it is improving patients’ health is not really there.

A recent study concluded, “Whether social prescribing can contribute to the health of a nation for social and psychological well-being is still to be determined,” while an article in the journal Public Health noted, “Further research is required to optimize social prescribing benefits.”

The practice of social prescribing faces another kind of challenge, which I see firsthand. As a family physician who works with both affluent and poor patients, I realize that my use of this approach has exposed deep inequities in their access to resources. On the one hand, I get professional satisfaction from recommending hikes in Rock Creek Park, running along the Mall or singing in a chorus (partly because of the evidence and partly because those are activities I do myself). But can I really ask a patient who works two jobs and cares for her children to find 30 minutes a day to squeeze in a walk in a park? Or a patient who lives in an unsafe neighborhood to take a daily jog around the block? Or one who has no car to take two buses to get to an art class on the other side of town?

As for how successful my social prescribing has been, so far it’s too small a sample size to have statistical meaning. But from a purely anecdotal standpoint, I will admit to mixed results so far. Some patients have reported back that they had taken my recommendations to heart and begun to change their lifestyles. Others showed my prescription in their bag and probably never looked at it again. I’m waiting for a big study or two to show me whether this trend can make a difference.

Many trends begin as great, well-intentioned ideas. Before we start proselytizing, we need to make sure that the resources are there, that the evidence of benefits is there and that we, as physicians, are well trained in how to push a change without causing any harm.

WEEKEND: FAMILY

**‘The worst mistake any parent can make
IS TO THINK THAT THIS COULD NEVER HAPPEN TO THEM.’**

Amber Andreasen
director of KidsAndCars.org

Heartbreaking mistake

Parents find it
hard to get
past child's
accidental
hot-car death

By KATE SANTICH
Orlando Sentinel

They've been vilified as "monsters" on social media. They have faced criminal prosecution. And most will spend a lifetime trying to forgive themselves.

But parents who inadvertently leave their infants and toddlers in a hot car are the same as most of the rest of us, experts say — sleep-deprived, hurried, distracted.

"The worst mistake any parent can make is to think that this could never happen to them," writes Amber Andreasen, director of the nonprofit KidsAndCars.org, which encourages moms, dads and caretakers to take simple steps to ensure they don't add to the grim statistics.

In the U.S., 37 times a year on average, and disproportionately in Florida, children die from heatstroke while locked in a parked car. Here, it happens even in winter.

In February, the victim was a 1-year-old Miami boy, whose 26-year-old mom went to work on what should have been a day off.

Infants can't tolerate heat the way adults do, researchers report. Their body temperatures rise up to five times faster than those of grown-ups, and the heat inside a closed car can climb 20 degrees in 10 minutes, even when the outside air isn't particularly warm.

The majority of deaths, Andreasen says, result from busy parents whose normal routines are disrupted.

Consider Jodie Edwards, an Ohio college professor who had taken her son to a new preschool and then "remembered" dropping off her 11-month-old daughter, Jenna, with the babysitter — as she usually did — before heading to work. Twenty minutes later, she had emailed a

friend, saying how big her daughter was getting. She had hung photos of her children on her office bulletin board that day. And she had carried her phone constantly — even to the bathroom — in case one of the caregivers called about the kids.

"Around 4 (p.m.), feeling happy and carefree, I walked to my van, got in and started to back out of my parking space," Edwards would write. "Only then did I see by looking in the rearview mirror and the child safety mirror that Jenna was in the van. I felt horror and panic as I raced around to her door (and) called 911. I knew immediately when I saw her that she had already died. I was so confused. I didn't know who put her there so I looked further into the van to see if someone also put my son in the van. As I tried to understand what happened, I frantically searched my brain for that memory of dropping her off. When I couldn't recall what the babysitter said to me during drop-off, it only took a moment for me to realize that I had made a horrible mistake. It is impossible to convey the depth of pain I felt. I wanted to die and felt as if I might. I barely had the ability to talk and had to lie on the ground because all of the strength had left my body. I wanted the earth to open up and swallow me."

Jenna died 10 years ago. It took her mother four years just to talk about the loss publicly. "I still wish I could turn back the clock and give my life to save hers," she said.

KidsAndCars has advocated for the auto industry to routinely install a "driver reminder system" when children are placed in back seats — as small children should be, with their car seats facing backwards — a system that, while safest in case of accidents, also lends itself to overlooking a child who quietly falls asleep. There are also after-market

alarms that parents already can buy to help remind them.

But even without such technology, the group has steps you can take to keep your child safe:

- Make it routine to open your vehicle's rear door and check the back seat every time you leave your car, even if you think you know your child isn't there. Putting something that you need — your cell phone, a briefcase, a purse — can reinforce the habit.

- Keep a stuffed animal in your child's car seat. Then when you put your baby in, move the animal to the front seat as a reminder.

- Ask your child-care provider to call you immediately if your child does not show up as planned.

- Be extra cautious when there has been a change in routine.

- To prevent your child from getting into your vehicle unsupervised, always keep keys out of reach of children and keep your vehicle locked.

- If your child goes missing, immediately check the inside and trunks of all vehicles in the area.

Edwards has continued to share her story in hopes of sparing other parents a similar fate. Ultimately, she and her husband decided to have more children, but they are not replacements for the daughter she lost.

"I think of her multiple times every day. When I look at my kids, often I think of how she's not there," Edwards said in 2016. "Every day, when I walk out of work to my car, I think of her. Every time I put one of my kids in a car seat, I think of her. It's hard to quantify how often — I don't think an hour goes by that I don't think of her, or how she died. Knowing her death is my fault is very difficult to live with. It's something I struggle with every day."

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Kids and tech: Hard facts, or hysteria?

Each evening, a little voice calls me. "C'mon," it says, "it will relax you. You know you want it." I tell myself I don't need it. I'm fine, sitting here watching "House Hunters" reruns with my husband. But it's no use. I can't resist the temptation.

With trembling hands, I reach for my tablet and jab the all-too-familiar icon. The screen comes alive with animated googly-eyed characters, bright primary blocks, flashing gold coins, polka-dotted balloons and twirling rockets. I feel my heart quicken with a surge of excitement. When I run out of lives on Toon Blast, I click the Toy Blast icon. I switch back and forth between the two nearly identical games in an adrenaline-fueled frenzy until my daughter yells, "Mom! Are you listening to me?" my husband bellows at me to come to bed, or my eyes bleed. Whichever comes first.

A few years ago, I used to "ask" at those "losers" who would post their Candy Crush levels on Facebook. When my aunt suggested I try Words With Friends, I scoffed and condescended. I might gander at a New York Times crossword puzzle or try a round of solitaire, but I didn't have time for silly apps.

Now here I am, ignoring my children and husband while I poke at cartoon characters on my tablet like some kind of trained chimpanzee. How did this happen?

According to Adam Alford, author of "Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked" (2017), tech executives are to blame for me being a Toon Blast junkie. Apparently, today's industry "big shots select apps based on how addictive they are. In fact, the tech industry is now being compared to American tobacco companies. In the 1960s, big tobacco execs realized that their customers' chemical dependence was their products' crucial selling point, but they didn't publicly acknowledge nicotine as addictive until 30 years later. Today's tech industry is being accused of the same kind of consumer manipulation."

In January, two big investors sent an open letter to Apple, citing the harmful effects of cellphone overuse on children, and calling on Apple to install more parental controls. The research cited in the letter — and all over the internet — is nothing short of alarming.

The letter, citing a study by Professor Jean Twenge of San Diego State University, stated: "U.S. teenagers who spend three hours a day or more on electronic devices are 35 percent more likely, and those who spend five hours or more are 71 percent more likely, to have a risk factor for suicide than those who spend less than 1 hour."

Another study published last month found that restricting bedroom use of smartphones was related to decreased risk of addiction, better focus, more satisfying relationships and overall happiness. A similar study found teenage girls at particular risk of depression and suicide from smartphone overuse. Some researchers have argued that digital technology is to blame for the delay in young people making social transitions such as working full-time, getting married and becoming parents. More than half of American teens admitted to "feeling addicted" to their smartphones in a 2016 survey by Common Sense Media.

However, other reputable scientists and industry insiders say that the research conducted thus far is inconclusive or flawed, and the worry over mobile device overuse is overblown. Some blame parents for not monitoring their children, while others cite studies showing that cellphone usage has actually benefited young people socially.

The only thing that is clear in this quagmire of sneaky tech executives, blame-deflecting parents and attention-seeking scientists is that, until there is unbiased research based on facts rather than fear or finances, parents have to use common sense in limiting their kids' tech usage.

All this analysis would normally induce craving for a few mind-numbing rounds of Toon Blast, but one study I read could cure my addiction cold turkey: a global survey conducted by AVG Technologies found that 54 percent of kids feel unimportant when their parents are distracted by their mobile devices. Oh, the irony.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

Dozens of young children die in the U.S. each year of heatstroke after being accidentally left in locked, parked cars. It usually happens when busy parents' normal routines are disrupted.

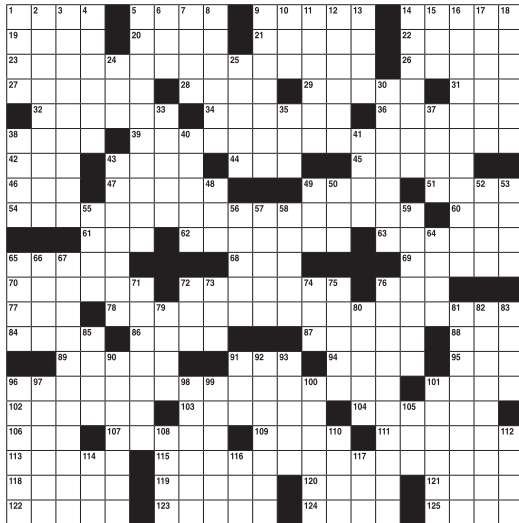
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WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

PLUSES AND MINUSES BY ROSS TRUDEAU / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

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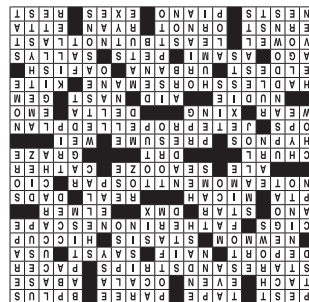
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FACES

WITH STYLE

'Fixer Upper' star debuts cookbook, talks post-show plans

By NEKESA MUMBI MOODY
Associated Press

Even though "Fixer Upper" has come to an end, Joanna Gaines is still going strong.

The designing half of the just-wrapped HGTV show is showcasing her cooking skills with the release of her "Magnolia Table" cookbook. She showcased tasty food made from the book's recipes at a recent lunch in New York as hubby Chip cracked jokes and playfully teased his pregnant wife while prepping biscuits in front of guests.

The pair talked about the inspiration for the book, which was finding time to spend time together with their four children.

"I just craved those moments around the table with our family," she said. "I wish we weren't intentional about it. Life would just really fly by really fast."

"Fixer Upper" has been one of HGTV's most successful shows, but

the couple decided to call it quits after the show's fifth season, which wrapped up earlier this month.

Gaines says while she's not slowing down, she is looking forward to some downtime when her fifth child is born in a few months.

"I think once this baby comes along, I'm really hoping to find time. That's what we're really just preparing for, just this new baby coming along and cherishing that time as a family," she said. The Gaines also have a home decorating line at Target; a restaurant; a bed and breakfast in their Waco, Texas, town; and a magazine.

"My little baby, she's 8 (years old) now, so I think this is something I'm learning all over again, even in buying all the stuff — what do I need for a newborn? — It's been a really fun

season," she said.

While "Fixer Upper" won't have any new episodes, it will air in reruns on HGTV, and wood craftsman Clint Harp is getting a spinoff on the DIY channel called "Wood Work."

Chip Gaines says the couple is close to Harp and his wife, Kelly. He hopes the couple takes time to enjoy the experience of the show.

"It feels like it started, then it was over, and you kind of look back and you notice all of these once-in-a-lifetime experiences that had happened in your wake, but it's really hard to appreciate them because it

felt like they were stacked one on top of the other, then they were coming at you the speed of light," he said. "Somehow figure out how to slow the experience down and enjoy the ride."



TV personality Joanna Gaines just released a cookbook, "Magnolia Table: A Collection of Recipes for Gathering."

BRIAN ACH, INVISION/AP

Azaria may 'step aside' from voicing Apu on 'The Simpsons'

From wire reports

Hank Azaria seems more willing to address the racial issues on "The Simpsons" than the show's writers.

The comedian dropped by "The Late Show" Tuesday to promote the return of his IFC comedy, "Brooklyn," but the conversation quickly veered to the long-running Fox sitcom and the recent controversy around Azaria's character, the stereotypically Indian clerk Apu Nahasapeemapetilon.

In the documentary "The Problem With Apu," Hari Kondabolu criticized the cartoon's representation of the Kwik-E-Mart owner, particularly his over-the-top accent and mannerisms.

The "Simpsons" showrunners were silent about the controversy for almost five months until a controversial episode earlier in the month in which Lisa makes out-of-character comments about how "something that started decades ago was and applauded and inoffensive is now politically incorrect."

On Tuesday, Azaria, who had previously only touched on the complaints and apologized to anyone who was "hurt and offended," said that "the idea that anyone young or old, past or present, being bullied based on Apu really makes me sad." "I had nothing to do with the writing or the voicing (in the episode that responded to "The Problem with Apu"). I think if anyone came away from that segment thinking they need to lighten up ... that's definitely not the message that I want to send," he told Colbert.

"I think the most important thing is to listen to Indian people and their experience with it. I really want to see Indian, South Asian writers in the writers room ... including how (Apu) is voiced or not voiced. I'm perfectly willing to step aside. It just feels like the right thing to do to me."

Oh, Yeezus: Trump and Kanye trade tweets

Washington's newest bromance: Yeezus and The Donald.

President Donald Trump is tweeting his thanks Wednesday to rap superstar Kanye West for his recent online support. Trump wrote, "Thank you Kanye, very cool!" in response to the tweets from West, who called the president "my brother."

West tweeted a number of times Wednesday expressing his admiration for Trump, saying they share "dragon energy." The rap star also posted a photo of himself wearing a "Make America Great Again" hat.

But in one tweet he noted that his wife, reality star Kim Kardashian West, wanted him to make clear that he did not agree "with everything Trump does."

Oswalt credits late wife in Golden State Killer case

"You did it, Michelle."

Comedian Patton Oswalt proudly and tenderly spoke those words to his late wife in an Instagram video Wednesday.

An arrest had been made in the case of the Golden State Killer, a moniker Michelle McNamara coined on her personal mission to catch a man responsible for at least 12 killings and 50 rapes throughout California in the 1970s and 80s.

McNamara died in her sleep at 46 in April 2016. She had been in the middle of her hunt for the killer and her book, "I'll Be Gone in the Dark: One Woman's Obsessive Search for the Golden State Killer." Oswalt helped finish the book after McNamara's death. It became a No. 1 New York Times best-seller.

On Wednesday, authorities announced that a DNA match led them to arrest the Golden State Killer, whom they identified as Joseph James DeAngelo, a 72-year-old

former police officer.

"This is insane," Oswalt said in another Instagram video when he first learned of the arrest. "Full tilt freak-out in effect."

Other news

■ George RR Martin has begun a new project, *Randall's House*, announced Wednesday that a prequel to the *Ice and Fire* series is coming out Nov. 20. The book is called "Fire and Blood," and it's the first of two planned works the publisher is calling "the definitive history of the Targaryens in Westeros." Meanwhile, about that OTHER book, Martin says don't expect anything in 2018.

■ The latest incarnation of *Fleetwood Mac* — Lindsey Buckingham is out, Neil Finn and Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers' Mike Campbell are in — has scheduled a huge, 50-city tour. Fleetwood Mac will launch The Fleetwood Mac Channel on SiriusXM on May 1, which will include interviews with the current lineup and members hosting their own shows.

■ John Cena says he still loves Nikki Bella after their sudden split earlier this month. "I love Nicole with all my heart, and the split is very tough," the wrestler-turned-actor told May 1's *Wrestler Press* on Wednesday. "But that's life. We all go through highs, we all go through lows. I'm going to get through it. I love her. I'll always love her. The fact that my heart hurts for her — I know I was in love. So I'll always have that." The 41-year-old performer was promoting the movie "Bumblebee" at CineCruz in the Las Vegas convention for theater owners.

■ Britain's royal officials say Prince Harry has asked elder brother Prince William to be best man at his wedding next month. Kensington Palace said Thursday that William is "honored" to be playing the key role when Harry marries U.S. actress Meghan Markle at Windsor Castle on May 19.



Inbar Lavi

'Imposters' star Inbar Lavi gets real about playing pretend

On the Bravo series "Imposters," Inbar Lavi plays a young woman named Maddie who is constantly reinventing herself, creating new identities to marry men and women and then steal their money. Off-screen, Lavi is no con artist but she says she can relate to the desire to hide behind different personas.

Born and raised in Israel, the actress admits to being "quite insecure" and "unhappy" as a child. "The happiest that I remember myself was putting on plays and pretending to be other people," said Lavi.

She credits her father for giving her the space to explore that. He would follow her around with a video camera, encourage her to put on plays and she was a devoted audience for her impromptu performances.

As her TV character struggles with allowing others to see her true self, Lavi, 31, hopes that others can see the beauty in being real.

"I'm still far away from the person I want to be but whoever this is for now, she's all right," she laughed.

Lavi recalls that the audition process for the role was challenging because she was essentially playing a shape shifter. "I think the rule I made for myself walking in was not to be Maddie. It was to be Inbar, because Inbar is an actress who plays other people for a living. As long as I could be true to myself as I could be, I would be true to Maddie. That was my focus."

From The Associated Press

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OPINION

Senate hopeful is 'Trumpier than Trump'

By KAREN TUMULTY

The Washington Post

If the 2018 midterm election were a season of "The Apprentice," we would already have a front-runner to beat out everyone else: Don Blankenship, fresh out of prison, who stands a decent chance of becoming West Virginia's next Republican nominee for the Senate.

Among this year's crop of red-state Republican candidates, there are more than a few who seem as eager as the contestants on President Donald Trump's old reality show to cast themselves as his clones. But when it comes to being an exemplar of the principles, or lack of them, that put Trump where he is today, none quite matches the former coal baron once considered the most reviled person in West Virginia.

At a Republican debate Monday night in Wheeling, Blankenship boasted that he is "Trumpier than Trump, and ... that's a fact."

If that is another way of saying he is shameless, Blankenship has a point.

He became notorious as the chief executive of Massey Energy when its Upper Big Branch coal mine exploded in 2010, killing 29 people weeks later. Blankenship was convicted of conspiring to violate workplace safety laws and sentenced to a year after a jury acquitted him of more serious felony charges that could have put him away for much longer.

Anyone else might be wracked with remorse. But in Blankenship's telling, he was a victim, too. Or as he put it, a "political prisoner." Like Trump, he sees the hand of the "deep state" behind his legal woes — in his case, a conspiracy between an overzealous Obama administration and the state's then-governor, Joe Manchin, a Democrat.

That would be the same Joe Manchin whom Blankenship hoped to unseat from the Senate. Manchin, though popular in West Virginia and a proven political survivor, is vulnerable, if for no other reason than that he is a Democrat in a state that



Calvin Mattheis/Bloomberg

Republican Don Blankenship, former CEO of Massey Energy Co., is seeking a U.S. Senate seat in West Virginia.

Trump won by more than 40 percentage points in 2016.

For Blankenship, however, this is personal. Manchin has said that responsibility for the mine disaster "permeated from the top down." The very week that Massey's former chief executive got out of prison last May, he let loose a barrage of tweets, including one that said: "I challenge Sen. Manchin to debate UBB truth. A U.S. Senator who says I have 'blood on my hands' should be man enough to face me in public."

As Blankenship campaigns throughout the state, he still brings up prison — but as a place where he would like to send Trump's favorite foil. "We don't need to investigate our president," one of his recent ads declared. "We need to arrest Hillary."

Blankenship also shares Trump's aversion to transparency. He has refused to disclose his personal finances to the Senate Select Committee on Ethics, even though it is legally required. He told The New York Times last isn't "much of a penalty" for flouting the law, and added, "I don't per-

sonally think anybody should have to disclose private information."

His reluctance to do so is understandable in light of the newspaper's report that his primary residence is actually a \$2.4 million villa near Las Vegas.

National Republicans have been watching the May 8 GOP primary race in horror. They believe that either of Blankenship's more mainstream rivals, Rep. Evan Jenkins and state Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, would stand a better chance of delivering the Senate seat this fall. Right now, the race is fluid, with a Fox News poll indicating the top three contenders within nine points of one another and at least one-quarter of the electorate still undecided.

Lately, things have gotten even uglier. Earlier this month, a new super PAC with ties to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., launched an ad accusing Blankenship's company of poisoning local drinking water with coal slurry even as its multimillionaire CEO installed a piping system to provide his own mansion with uncontaminated water. The tag line: "Isn't there enough toxic sludge in Washington?"

Blankenship responded with ... immigrant bashing, a favorite diversionary tactic by you-know-who.

In an interview Monday with a West Virginia radio show, Blankenship accused McConnell of "obstructing President Trump's put-America-first program," and speculated that the majority leader might be "soft on China" because his "father-in-law is a wealthy China person." McConnell's wife is Taiwan-born Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao, whose Chinese-American father founded a shipping company.

At any other time, a candidate with Blankenship's baggage would not have stood a chance. But in 2018, he might actually be expanding the list of vessels suspected of conducting illegal trade for North Korea. In which case, "Trumpier than Trump" will have worked as a slogan — and as a requirement for decency.

Karen Tumulty is a Washington Post columnist covering national politics.

Tighten, don't ease, sanctions against N. Korea

By ELIZABETH ROSENBERG

AND NEIL BHATTIA

Bloomberg View

The administration of President Donald Trump may or may not be right in thinking that its "maximum pressure" campaign has brought North Korea to the bargaining table. What's certain is that there remain cracks in that campaign. To sustain pressure on the Pyongyang regime and give the U.S. leverage in upcoming talks between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, they need to be plugged.

Certainly, the Trump administration deserves credit for coordinating the harshest set of sanctions ever levied against North Korea, targeting in particular its energy trade with the outside world. The United States has banned member states from buying North Korean coal and sharply curtailed the volume of crude oil and refined petroleum products the country can import. The U.N. also prohibits ship-to-ship transfers of fuel, in addition to exports of commodities such as iron and seafood.

While such measures are welcome, they're virtually unenforceable under the current system. The U.N. committee tasked with monitoring sanctions is overworked, not particularly expert in hydrocarbon markets and starved of administrative capacity. The onus to ensure that the committee is supplied with timely, accurate data falls to national governments. They in turn depend on compliance by

companies that have little incentive to cooperate enthusiastically.

To improve oversight, the U.S. and like-minded countries should enlist the help of the International Energy Agency. The IEA is a gold-standard barrel-counter. It has a sophisticated administrative apparatus already dedicated to understanding global energy market flows, as well as established relations with energy officials and private firms around the world. Given its technical expertise and data-gathering capabilities, the agency could develop a much more effective process to monitor North Korea's energy trading and pinpoint where it's skirting sanctions.

Weak inspection rules for ocean-going vessels pose another challenge. When ships suspected of illegally transporting prohibited goods for North Korea are in port or territorial waters, U.N. member states are bound to inspect them. On the high seas, though, that requirement is nonbinding, since many governments fear such action could violate freedom of navigation. Can't. North Korea conducts much of its business through ship-to-ship transfers in international waters.

In late February, the U.S. announced a major tranche of sanctions on vessels and shippers engaged in such transfers. It also issued maritime guidance to help shipping and insurance companies, banks and port managers, among others, appreciate the risks they ran if they participated in or overlooked such activity. A day later, the Japanese government documented public-

ly, North Korea was at it again.

China and Russia should join with the U.S. in pushing for binding inspections rules on the high seas. Both countries have resisted tougher measures in the past, even merely expanding the list of vessels suspected of conducting illegal trade for North Korea. Still, they share a desire for stability in the region and have signaled that the time to ignore North Korean sanctions violations is over. It's in their interests to show Kim that the international community doesn't intend to be divided.

Separately, the U.S. and China could launch a joint maritime interdiction effort, which isn't unprecedented and for which the two navies have appropriate staging areas and vessel capacity. As far-fetched as it may sound, given the current trade tensions, it would be a relatively painless way to demonstrate resolve ahead of talks with North Korea, in which both countries are deeply invested.

Ultimately, only those negotiations can determine whether North Korea will give up its nuclear program. But only a serious and sustained pressure campaign, with no loopholes, is likely to convince Kim that he can neither buy off the U.S. with a false peace offering nor continue to threaten international security. As he prepares for their summit, Trump should keep that in mind.

Elizabeth Rosenberg is a senior fellow and director of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Program at the Center for a New American Security. Neil Bhattia is the program's research associate.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Never too late to get justice The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee

In an era when true crime tales of serial killers are the stuff of Netflix binges, it may be difficult to appreciate the fear spread in California's capital by the East Area Rapist in 1976.

The Golden State's dark side was, of course, well known by then — the Zodiac Killer, Charles Manson — but in Sacramento, 1976 was a "time of innocence" when kids played outside until dark and many residents didn't lock their doors, recalled Sacramento County District Attorney Marie Schubert. Schubert was 12 that year and living in the area. Once the assaults started, she said, "it all changed."

Wednesday, thanks to an investigation that was agonizingly slow for decades and then lightning fast, Schubert and an array of California law enforcement officials announced an arrest in the terrifying crime spree that encompassed at least 12 slayings and 45 rapes. The case is still unfolding, but there are already important takeaways:

The persistence of law enforcement to seek justice for victims: After an event in June 2016 to mark 40 years since the first crime, Schubert and Sheriff Scott Jones added resources and renewed their commitment to solve the case.

The difference that public attention can make: Hundreds of tips poured in after 2016, and focus on the suspect — who also became known as the Golden State Killer as he began his killing spree in Southern California — intensified with a book, "I'll Be Gone in the Dark," that reached No. 1 on The New York Times' bestseller list last month and a documentary that aired this month at the Delta King Theatre in Old Sacramento.

The value of DNA testing and evidence: While officials were sparing with the details, they said that new technology allowed DNA samples from several old crime scenes to be used and eventually matched last week with a sample obtained by detectives from material discarded by Joseph James DeAngelo.

DeAngelo, 72, a former cop who lived for more than three decades in Citrus Heights, was arrested without incident on Tuesday. Wednesday, officials said he has been charged with murder in the February 1976 slayings of Catherine and Kathy Maguire in Ranchito, Cordova and the March 1980 killings of Charlene and Lyman Smith in Ventura County.

"The answer has always been in Sacramento," Schubert, who is facing a tough reelection fight, said at the press conference in front of Sacramento County's crime lab. "The answer was always going to be in the DNA."

That truth should again spotlight that California could be doing more with DNA evidence — especially the thousands of rape kits sitting in evidence rooms that have gone untested.

So far, state lawmakers have been unwilling to spend significant money to cut down the backlog. Last year, the only bill they passed was to add a check-off on state income tax returns so Californians can donate for testing. It's miserly and embarrassing.

At Wednesday's arrest announcement, Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley made a point to promote Senate Bill 1449, which would require all new rape kits to be sent to crime labs so the backlog doesn't grow and which includes \$2 million in funding. Legislators need to strongly consider that bill if they're paying



Sacramento County, Calif., District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert, joined by Sacramento County Sheriff Scott Jones, discusses the arrest of Joseph James DeAngelo, 72, for a string of violent crimes in the 1970s and '80s on Wednesday in Sacramento.

RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

any attention to this case.

For now, we can hope the arrest eases the anguish for the victims and their loved ones — hundreds now across several generations, as we were reminded by Bruce Harrington, whose brother and sister-in-law were slain in 1980 in Dana Point. "It's time for all victims to grieve," he said.

It appears justice will finally be done in this case. But many, many other victims still wait.

Revisiting the AUMF is vital The Orange County (Calif.) Register

Congress has long abdicated its constitutional authority with respect to the nation's numerous and ever-expanding wars abroad.

It was welcome news, then, to learn that Sens. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., and Tim Kaine, D-Va., have put forward a new Authorization for Use of Military Force for consideration. At the very least, the offering of a new AUMF gives Congress a long-overdue opportunity to talk about America's wars and perhaps even contemplate whether the United States should continue any of those efforts.

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks, Congress rushed to pass an AUMF that granted the executive branch the authority to order military action against those responsible for the attacks. Unfortunately, in the time since then, the 2001 AUMF has been used to justify American military action in countries and against groups that had nothing to do with the 9/11 attacks, with little congressional oversight.

The AUMF proposed by Corker and Kaine, while appreciated as a starting point for conversation, regrettably does nothing to rein in America's perpetual state of war. The AUMF authorizes military action against al-Qaida, the Taliban and Islamic State, as well as at least five "existing or associated forces": al-Shabab in Somalia, the Haqqani Network in Afghanistan, al-Qaida in Syria, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (in northern Africa). The AUMF also permits the president to add new groups to the AUMF, as well as new countries where operations can be conducted, beyond Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Somalia and Yemen, though it does provide for congressional review for doing so.

While there are elements of the new AUMF that might be an improvement over the 2001 AUMF in totality, what the proposed new AUMF does is keep the United States engaged in wars in at least half a dozen countries against an ever-expanding number of groups, with no sunset provisions or geographical limitations.

In other words, it merely continues, with congressional approval, what the war without clear goals or limits. After 17 years

of perpetual war, it is time we reconsider our wasteful interventionism abroad and bring the troops home.

Lynchings can't be forgotten The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer

Just about every American knows the importance of 1776, when 13 colonies declared their independence and created a democratic experiment unlike any other in world history. We will celebrate the 242nd anniversary of that event on July 4 with hot dogs and bathing suits and furniture sales.

Too few Americans, however, know about what happened 100 years later, and how it changed the trajectory of this country in ways nearly as profound. It was 1876, the year Republican Rutherford B. Hayes, Democrat Samuel J. Tilden, Congress and the Supreme Court compromised to settle a tight election. Hayes became president. Tilden's wish, and that of other white Southerners, that federal troops be removed from the South, was granted. It came just four years after Congress had restored full civil rights to Confederate leaders, making them eligible to hold office again.

The compromise set the stage for white mob rule that resulted in more than 4,000 lynchings and the unleashing of violence-backed Jim Crow. It also helped launch a devastating convict leasing system that marked the beginning of racial disparities in the criminal justice system that remain today. It was the end of an enormous amount of progress made by former enslaved Africans during Reconstruction.

There were at least 123 lynchings in North Carolina and 185 in South Carolina between 1880 and 1950, according to the Equal Justice Initiative, a nonprofit that fights mass incarceration and racial injustice. New Hanover, N.C., tied for the 15th-most active lynching county in the nation.

EJI believes an unflinching grappling with that history can help the country better understand — and heal — racial wounds that still fester. Those wounds have been reopened in the past couple of years with the increasing public presence of emboldened white supremacists and fights over public Confederate monuments. That hope for healing is why the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice opened this week in Montgomery, Ala.

Among the victims the museum honors are thousands who may remain unknown. Some were burned alive; some had their heads crushed; some were sprayed with bullets. Some died for the sin of demanding racial equality or daring to vote. Others were hanged after being falsely accused of raping white women, or even talking to them. Others were murdered for refusing to work for white farmers who treated them like slaves. One victim, Mary Turner, was lynched in 1918 in Lowndes County, Ga.,

after she complained that her husband had been beaten.

Such acts were widely accepted. Members of media outlets, as well as local, state and federal law enforcement officials, either participated in those horrors or did little to stop them.

A Paris, Texas, lynching is documented by the museum: "On July 6, 1920, a mob of 150 gathered to watch as (two) men were tied to a flagpole at the fairgrounds, tortured, and burned to death. ... (Their) sisters were jailed under the pretense of protection but then beaten and gang-raped by more than twenty white men."

It's not easy to acknowledge such things. But the truth, no matter how gut-wrenching, can set us free — and may be the only thing that can.

Interest in prince across pond The New York Times

It was an English monarch who purportedly said, "No news is better than evil news," and thereby launched an enduring (though now somewhat less wordy) maxim. Unless, King James I should have added, it's news about his successors. In 1660, when the first child, the Duchess of Cambridge, entered the maternity hospital until she and her husband, Prince William, emerged with their newborn boy 12 hours later, the minutiae of the royal birth on Monday dominated the news in Britain — and not only there. The arrival of the much-prince-prince, Prince George, in Washington was no competition for the suspense in London, broken shortly after 11 a.m. not by the traditional notice in a wooden frame posted by the gates of Buckingham Palace (that came later, carried out by two women in morning coats, black ties and blue velvet waistcoats) but by a tweet from Kensington Palace that the duchess "was safely delivered of a son."

Before and after that there was little the inquiring public would not learn. It was "breaking news" when Prince William brought his other children, little Prince George, still in his second year, and Prince Charlotte, who gave an oh-so-precious wave to the crowd, to visit their new brother. The royal obstetrician and royal gynecologist — "royal" was the word of the day — were richly profited. The fact that Lady Gabriella Windsor, the daughter of Prince and Princess Michael of Kent, had been born in the same hospital on the same day, only 37 years earlier, was presented as a remarkable coincidence. Westminster Abbey announced it would ring a full peal of "Cambridge Surprise Royal" on Tuesday; tabloids noted with disapproval that the Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, took the opportunity to send his greetings to "Kate and William."

And so it went. That which did remain unknown by day's end — the baby's name and the godparents — was endlessly discussed. Bookmakers were putting odds on Arthur, Albert, Frederick, James and Philip; as for sponsors, the speculation was that at least one of the royal family's extended the throne would not need a roster of prominent godparents like his siblings.

Was it too much? Of course, but when offered alongside all the other "evil news" of White House inquiries, shooting rampages and other horrors, it's barely enough as Monday's headline.

Though the British royalty went through a rough patch in the 1990s with a rash of divorces, scandals and salacious leaks and the death of Prince William's mother, Diana, Princess of Wales, today Queen Elizabeth II, who turned 92 on Saturday, presides over a curiously sympathetic and adored family of arch-traditionalists, far-left titles and very modern lives. While the duchess was giving birth, her brother-in-law Prince Harry and his fiancée, Meghan Markle, an American actress, were attending a memorial service on the 25th anniversary of the death of Stephen Lawrence, murdered because of a racially motivated attack.

So stay tuned.

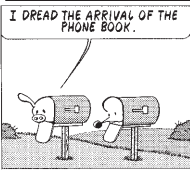
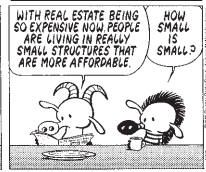
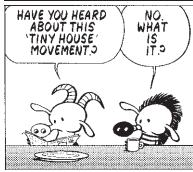
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Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



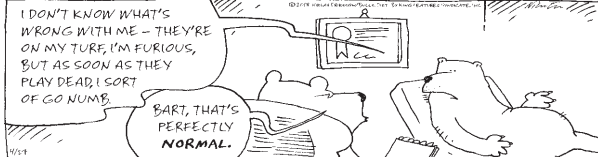
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
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41					42	43				44	45	
46					47				48			
49					50				51			

ACROSS

- 1 Iota
- 4 Fork option
- 8 Annoys
- 12 Fireplace residue
- 13 Not busy
- 14 Postal delivery
- 15 Actor
- 17 Heap
- 18 Ready for customers
- 19 Underneath
- 20 Dumpster device
- 22 Secondhand
- 24 Unsigned (Abbr.)
- 25 Coffee bar order
- 29 Pickle holder
- 30 Commuter's choice
- 31 Dos preceeder
- 32 "18 or older" provision
- 34 Use scissors
- 35 Flair
- 36 Unpaid bills
- 37 Paratrooper's need
- 40 Corn Belt state
- 41 Galley supply
- 42 Anise-flavored liqueur
- 46 Engine sound
- 47 Spring
- 48 "Ben- —"

DOWN

- 49 Too
- 50 Relaxed
- 51 Mayo ingredient
- 22 Olympic track star Bolt
- 23 Roasting rod
- 25 Wry Bombeck
- 26 Catch some rays
- 27 Peevish fit
- 28 "Clumsy me!"
- 30 Scrabble piece
- 33 "Get a move on!"
- 34 Stitched
- 36 Crocheted mat
- 37 Club in a
- 38 Greet
- 39 Grecian vessels
- 40 Egyptian deity
- 42 High card
- 43 Feathery wrap
- 44 Embrace
- 45 Work unit

Answer to Previous Puzzle

L	E	N	O	E	L	K	S	C	A	T
A	L	O	U	S	E	T	I	T	A	M
C	E	N	T	O	M	A	S	I	A	
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P	E	N	N		R	T	E		D	R

CRYPTOQUIP

PSXCI ECHGOCO BEPLX HCA-
OXTZXUXA ABXWWXUL PJOXI
ZCUOGSGZCOX GI LKYCHHWXL:

C KYCUUXW UXXJ.

Yesterday's Cryptiquip: I HAVE A PECULIAR, STRONG COMPULSION TO RATION EVERYTHING OUT. YOU MIGHT SAY I ALOT A LOT.

Today's Cryptiquip Clue: K equals Q

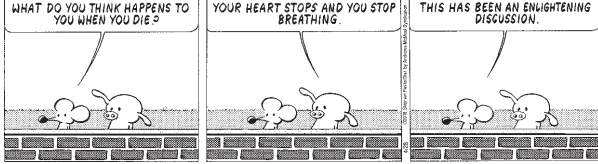
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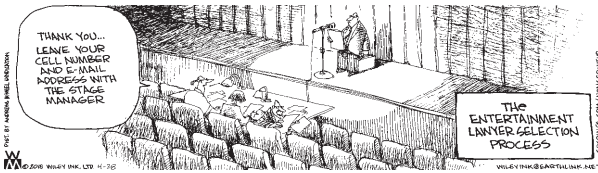
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



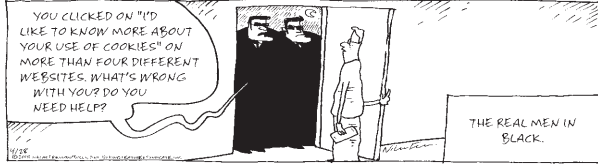
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Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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48					49				50			
51					52				53			
54					55				56			

ACROSS

- 1 Regrettably
- 5 Ms. McEntire
- 9 Binge
- 12 Towering
- 13 Right angles
- 14 Hearty quaff
- 15 Aware of
- 16 Hawaiian island
- 17 Scottish river
- 18 Cat call
- 19 Inventor Whitney
- 20 Onion's kin
- 21 Rate

DOWN

- 55 Spirited horse
- 56 Jules Verne captain
- 22 Popular typeface
- 24 Bakery array
- 25 Pouch
- 26 Soul, to Sartre
- 27 Batman portrayer Kilmer
- 29 Tolkien creature
- 30 Caustic cleaner
- 31 Perched
- 35 Wine storage area
- 36 "Excellent!"
- 39 Chromosome part
- 40 Fine
- 41 Curved molding
- 43 Start of a spell
- 45 Land measure
- 46 500 sheets
- 47 Capital on a fjord
- 49 Clean air org.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

BIT	CR	ROAD	DIRKS
ASH	IDLE	MAIL	
THE	SPIAN	PILE	
	OPEN	BELOW	
RADAR	USED		
ANON	ESPRESSO		
JAR	TRAIN	UNO	
AGEL	IMIT	SNIP	
	ELAN	DEBTS	
CHUTE		IOWA	
OARS	AB	SIN	THE
PING	COIL	HUR	
ALSO	EASY	EGG	

4-28

CRYPTOQUIP

RSDR JQUH WDGC ALAWLJ
CQLP PQAL JLDZZT UJDVT
RSFGYP. F RSFGH SL'P RSL

W F V D J J L P R Y B F R D J F P R .
Yesterday's Cryptquip: OCEAN HABITAT
WHOSE BAD-TEMPERED DWELLERS OFTEN
PARTICIPATE IN SQUABBLES: A QUARREL REEF.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: R equals T



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HIGH SCHOOL: DODEA EUROPE

Packed schedule

Soccer, baseball, softball tournaments overlap due to AP testing

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

The 2018 DODEA Europe soccer season is fast approaching its season-ending tournaments. At the same time, it's fast approaching the second extended break of the spring.

This year's European soccer tournaments will be played on a Monday-Thursday schedule for the first time since 2015, a contrast from the 2016 and 2017 editions that ran from Wednesday through Saturday. The 2018 tournaments are set for May 21-24 at sites around the Kaiserslautern Military Community in Germany. DODEA Europe athletic director Kathleen Clemmons cited the second week of AP testing as the reason for the switch. The tournaments, had they matched last year's placement ending the weekend before Memorial Day, would have overlapped with the May 14-18 round of tests. The academic pursuit would take precedence over the athletic one, leaving most or all teams without key players.

Instead, the event will overlap with the European baseball and softball tournaments, which will start their concurrent three-day runs on the same day soccer is scheduled to conclude with six divisional championship matches at Kaiserslautern High School. That makes for a frantic final week of the DODEA Europe sports calendar, featuring playoff events every day from Monday through Saturday — including baseball, softball and track and field finals on Saturday, May 26.

But first, the schedule quirk produces a nine-day gap in the DODEA Europe soccer season. The regular season ends on Saturday, May 12, and teams will be idle until their tournaments.

Well, not exactly. Ideally, "I will try to create a couple of game-like settings with extended play during the week before to help keep up our game-level conditioning," Vicenza girls coach Adam Ridgley said.



Black Forest Academy's Debbie Widmer, right, tries to get the ball ahead of Kaiserslautern's Chloe Martin last month.

Nicole Angel, coach of the defending Division I champion Wiesbaden girls, said that the lack of live-game action represents a challenge, something she'll counteract with "high-intensity play" in practice sessions. But she added that the Warriors plan to take full advantage of the "rest and game planning" made possible by the week off.

"We can heal our bodies while simultaneously focusing our efforts on tailoring our game plan in preparation for tournament play," Angel said.

The break also represents a chance for teams to strengthen their bonds before subjecting them to the rigors of a grueling tournament. Hohenfels girls coach Rayshell Threadgill hopes to arrange a "team-building opportunity" on May 19, the unscheduled Saturday before tournament play.

Not that her team needs any more motivation.

"The four-day tournament is what the team looks forward to," Threadgill said. "So break or no break, it wouldn't affect the high-caliber excitement the team has for Europeans."

Some teams have already made more formal plans for the week-end ahead of the tournaments, largely because those plans involve protracted bus rides across Europe. Distant teams such as Lakenheath and Naples will begin their long journeys on Saturday, some immediately after their school's prom festivities. That puts the teams in the KMC on Sunday ahead of their Monday tournament openers, which could start as early as 8:30 a.m.

"We travel all night and use Sunday as rest to begin playing on Monday," Lakenheath boys coach Greg Mako said. "Then after Thursday's finals, we board the bus for another all-night ride back to school. Friday morning, we are expected to report to duty after riding the bus all night long."

Mako said the week before that hectic tournament week provides an opportunity to arrange les-

son plans for substitute teachers — the vast majority of DODEA Europe coaches are also teachers — and for athletes to get their "homework plans in line" to avoid falling behind in the crucial final weeks of the school year.

The Monday-Thursday schedule makes that effort more difficult, though Angel joked that her players don't mind the "additional excused absences" the Monday-Thursday schedule requires as opposed to a Wednesday-Saturday format. It also complicates the logistics for fans of distant teams hoping to make their way to KMC to register their support in person.

"Since most of our parents are not within driving distance, the Wednesday-Saturday schedule allows for more of our fan base to fly up and support our girls," Naples girls coach Rebecca Lucy said.

That's not the only factor that might suppress attendance. The latest of Thursday's six championship matches is set to start at 7 p.m., placing the Division I awards ceremony that immediately follows it close to 9 p.m. And that's not accounting for any of the late starts and delays for which DODEA Europe championships events are notorious.

"There will be fewer kids who will stay up late if there is school the next day," Mako said. "And there will be fewer people who attend the games since it is Thursday instead of Saturday."

The consequences of the tournament's schedule are primarily felt by the teams furthest removed from the event's sites in southwest Germany. While those coaches can't help but grapple with that reality, the teams waiting in and around the host cities are also well aware of it.

"We plan on resting on May 19," Kaiserslautern girls coach Susan Fitzpatrick said. "One benefit of our location is we will be finished with traveling."

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MARTIN EGNAS/Stars and Stripes

Vilseck's Joanne Baker hits the ball in a game against Kaiserslautern at Vilseck, Germany, on April 14.

Weekend peek

Meets should clear up baseball, softball races

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

DODEA Europe's growing trend of multiple-team meets continues on the diamonds of northern Italy this weekend.

Vicenza welcomes Naples, Stuttgart and Vilseck to town for a four-school Division I series, while Hohenfels, Rota and Sigonella visit Aviano for a Division II/III version. Each participating team will play four games over the weekend, substantially fleshing out their regular-season schedules and providing a clearer picture of the divisional championship races as the postseason looms less than a month away.

Naples sits atop the Division I baseball standings with six wins in as many games, including four defeats of winless divisional and Italian rival Vicenza. But the Wildcats will face unprecedented tests this weekend in the form of Friday and Saturday matchups with the perennially tough Stuttgart Panthers. First-game victories in doubleheader splits with Wiesbaden and defending champion Ramstein suggest this Panthers team has the goods to put the program back in the European championship game.

The Division I softball meet, meanwhile, offers its four com-

petitors the chance to improve their postseason positioning. Naples and Vicenza have traded wins and losses in their four matchups to date, while rebuilding Stuttgart is winless in four games. Vilseck holds perhaps the most upside of the group, having played powerhouse reigning champion Ramstein largely even in 15-14 and 19-11 losses a week ago, and could play its way into a premier tournament seed with a strong showing this weekend.

The softball slate in Aviano, meanwhile, features a game that is both a rematch of a close game from a weekend ago and a potential preview of next month's final. Rota defeated Sigonella 3-2 on April 21, a day after Sigonella throttled Rota 9-1, suggesting a rivalry that still has plenty of chapters left to unfold before spring's end.

The four Division II/III baseball teams in action at Aviano this weekend are locked in a four-way scrum in the small-school standings behind Spangdahm, which bested Hohenfels in its only two divisional games to date. Any of the four squads could vastly improve its postseason stature with a winning mark among this weekend's four games.

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Games of the week

Baseball

**SHAPE at Kaiserslautern, Friday;
SHAPE at Wiesbaden, Saturday**

It's long been a rite of passage in DODEA Europe sports — a team from the organization's outlying areas flashes championship potential, then travels to the heartland of southwestern Germany to test it at the highest levels.

The SHAPE baseball team is next up to travel that road. The Spartans put their strong start on the line against two of DODEA Europe's most consistent large-school programs, Kaiserslautern and Wiesbaden, for a two-day, four-game gauntlet that matches the amount of games SHAPE has played in the entire season prior to this weekend.

Notably, the Spartans have already proven themselves to a considerable extent. They started the season playing reigning dynasty Ramstein to a stalemate, chasing a 2-1 loss with a 6-5 win over the Royals on March 24. A sweep of Division I rival Lakenheath last weekend has SHAPE riding a three-game winning streak into this weekend's road trip.



KENT HARRIS/Stars and Stripes

Stuttgart's William Bermudez, left, and Naples' Evan Cone battle for the ball on April 20 in Vicenza, Italy.

HIGH SCHOOL/MLB

Weekend peek

‘Fingers crossed’ for Korea meet; qualifying in track down to wire

By DAVE ORNAUER

Stars and Stripes

It would be perfectly understandable if coaches and athletes gathered Saturday at Camp Humphreys gazed with one eye on the track and another on the sky.

The Korea district track and field championship has been canceled the past two years due to poor air quality. And they're hoping it doesn't happen this straight year.

“Everybody has their fingers crossed,” Humphreys coach Ron Merriwether said. He and meet organizers are closely monitoring the situation, “but right now, it looks like things are a go.”

Air quality is a serious issue in the spring in Korea, and to a lesser extent, Japan and Okinawa, thanks to “yellow dust” emanating from China and Mongolia’s Gobi Desert.

Levels are closely monitored in Korea; any Air Quality Index reading above 150 is considered unhealthy and can be cause to postpone or cancel athletic events. Last year, the AQI was 286 at start time and the meet was canceled for a second straight year.

Saturday’s forecast calls for elevated, but not unhealthy levels. At noon Thursday, the level was 117, according to AQICN.org.

Saturday’s meet is one of the highlights of a weekend filled with district events in Japan, Okinawa and Korea — the final full weekend of meets, matches and games before Far East week May 21-23.

For track and field athletes who have yet to qualify for the Far East Meet May 21-22 at Yokota, Saturday brings a sense of urgency, since it’s the last weekend in which they can qualify.

“It’s a meet that means something,” Kubasaki coach Kenneth Gibson said of the Okinawa district finals Saturday at American Village Stadium in Chatan. “It’s an opportunity for kids to go to Far East. A lot of kids will be at their peak now.”

All three districts are “gearing themselves up for a Jim Dander of a final,” said Bruce Carrick, longtime Kanto Plain meet marshal.

The Kanto finals are actually on May 12, but Saturday’s meet, at Yokota, is one of two “last-chance” Far East qualifiers for Japan athletes; the other being Tuesday, also at Yokota.

“The best efforts will be by those who have a chance to qualify but haven’t made it yet,” Carrick said.

Other best efforts may come in the high jump and long jump in Korea:

■ Humphreys’ Quintin Metcalf — high-jumped 1.96 meters last week, 0.4 short of the Pacific



EMILIA LEWIS/Special to Stars and Stripes

Jessica Atkinson of Zama American shouts as she crosses the plate in a losing effort on Thursday against Edgren. The Eagles edged the Trojans 8-7 on the opening day of the DODEA Japan softball tournament.

ic record of 2.00 set in 2011 by Kadena’s Lotty Smith.

■ Seoul American’s Alyse Neal has matched her Far East meet record in the long jump, 5.30 meters, twice this season and has said she has her eyes on the Pacific mark of 5.42, set 12 years ago and matched in 2010.

“It might happen,” Merriwether said. “Hopefully, they’ll do it.”

District finals in other sports are already underway in Japan and Korea. DODEA Japan’s baseball and softball tournaments began Thursday at Zama, while soccer also got started Thursday, boys at Kinrick and girls at Perry.

Yokota is seeking three-peats in baseball and boys soccer, while Perry’s girls hope to defend their soccer title on home turf and Kinrick is trying to make it back-to-back softball titles at Zama.

Championship pairings are already set in the Korean-American Interscholastic Activities Conference Blue Division soccer tournaments, which began Wednesday.

Seoul Foreign’s boys and girls play in both KAIAC Blue finals Saturday against Yongson.

One could easily call the boys and girls third-place matches the “DODEA Korea championships.” Seoul American plays Humphreys for third place in the boys, while the Falcons take on dethroned two-time tournament Osan for third in the girls.

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Scoreboard

American League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	18	5	.783	—
New York	14	9	.609	4
Toronto	9	13	.409	8½
Tampa Bay	5	18	.250	12½
Baltimore	5	18	.250	12½

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	13	9	.591	—
Detroit	10	12	.455	3
Minnesota	8	11	.421	3½
Chicago	5	16	.238	7½
Kansas City	5	17	.227	8

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	16	9	.640	—
Los Angeles	13	10	.565	2½
Seattle	10	12	.450	5½
Oakland	9	12	.429	6
Texas	9	17	.346	8

National League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	15	7	.682	—
Philadelphia	15	8	.652	½
Atlanta	13	10	.565	2½
Washington	11	14	.440	5½
Miami	9	17	.292	9

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	16	9	.640	—
St. Louis	15	9	.609	1
Pittsburgh	13	11	.542	2½
Chicago	11	10	.524	2½
Cincinnati	9	14	.391	10½

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Arizona	16	9	.636	—
Colorado	14	12	.538	3½
Los Angeles	13	10	.565	2½
San Francisco	11	13	.458	5½
San Diego	11	17	.346	8½

Wednesday’s games

Houston 5, L.A. Angels 2
Seattle 4, Chicago White Sox 3
Detroit 13, Pittsburgh 10, 1st game
Pittsburgh 8, Detroit 3, 2nd game
N.Y. Yankees 7, Minnesota 4
Tampa Bay 8, Baltimore 4
Boston 4, Toronto 3
Cleveland 4, Chicago Cubs 1
Texas 4, Oakland 2
Milwaukee 6, Kansas City 2
Colorado 5, San Francisco 2
Washington 13, San Francisco 2
Atlanta 5, Cincinnati 4
Philadelphia 5, Arizona 3
Miami 8, L.A. Dodgers 6
St. Louis 9, N.Y. Mets 6
Detroit at Pittsburgh
Cincinnati at N.Y. Yankees
Seattle at Cleveland
Tampa Bay at Baltimore
Boston at Toronto
Chicago White Sox at Kansas City
Astoria at Cincinnati
Arizona at Philadelphia
N.Y. Mets at St. Louis
Milwaukee at Chicago Cubs
Detroit at Baltimore (Tillman 0-4)
Texas (Minor 1-1) at Toronto (Stroman 0-2)
Seattle (Ramirez 0-1) at Cleveland (Kubler 2-1)
Tampa Bay (Snell 3-1) at Boston (Pomeroy 0-2)
Cincinnati (Castillo 1-3) at Minnesota (Hughes 0-3)
Oakland (Manea 3-2) at Houston (Keuchel 1-3)
Chicago White Sox (Lopez 0-2) at Kansas City (Duffy 0-3)
N.Y. Yankees (Severino 4-1) at L.A. Angels (Reyes 0-1)
Milwaukee (Suter 1-2) at Chicago Cubs (Darvish 0-2)
Arizona (Godley 3-1) at Washington (Nola 2-1)
Atlanta (Teheran 1-1) at Philadelphia (Shane Bieber 1-1)
St. Louis (Mikolas 3-0) at Pittsburgh (Braun 2-1)
Los Angeles (Anderson 1-0) at Miami (Urena 0-3)
N.Y. Mets (deGrom 2-0) at San Diego (Richard 1-2)
L.A. Dodgers (Ryu 3-0) at San Francisco (Hollander 0-3)

Friday’s games

Cincinnati at Minnesota
Milwaukee at Chicago Cubs
Arizona at Washington
L.A. Dodgers at San Francisco, 2
Atlanta at Philadelphia
St. Louis at Pittsburgh
Colorado at Miami
N.Y. Mets at San Diego

Calendar

May 4-6 — Los Angeles Dodgers vs. San Diego at Monterey, Mexico.
June 4 — Amateur draft starts.
June 13-14 — Owners’ meetings, New York.
June 15 — International amateur signing period closes.
July 2 — International amateur signing period opens.
July 6 — Last day to sign for amateur draft picks subject to deadline.
July 17 — All-Star Game, Washington.
July 29 — Hall of Fame inductions, Cooperstown, N.Y.
July 31 — Last day to trade a player without securing waivers.
Aug. 31 — Last day to be contracted to an organization and be eligible for post-season roster.
Oct. 23 — Wild-card games.
Dec. 10-13 — Winter meetings, Las Vegas.

Braves’ Acuna scores in debut

By MARK SCHMETZER

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Prized prospect Ronald Acuna Jr. looked like a polished veteran.

The 20-year-old Acuna singled and scored the tying run in the eighth inning of his big league debut, and the Atlanta Braves went on to beat the Cincinnati Reds 5-4 Wednesday night.

Acuna became the youngest player in the majors when he was called up from Triple-A before the game. He went 1-for-5 and played left field.

“As soon as I hit the field, I felt at home,” Acuna said through a translator. “I felt comfortable.”

Atlanta manager Brian Snitser saw no signs of nerves from his prodigy.

“I thought he was really good,” Snitser said. “Nothing affected him. He wasn’t overwhelmed. He went out and played his game.”

Acuna asked for jersey No. 13, following fellow Venezuelans Dave Concepcion, Ozzie Guillen and Omar Vizquel. The newcomers twice fell out deep, and struck out twice.

Ozzie Albies, the second-youngest player in the bigs at 21, homered for Atlanta. He was hit by a pitch to begin the ninth and scored the go-ahead run on Johan Camargo’s second double of the game, a sharp one-hopper that shortstop C.J. Pennington couldn’t backhand.

Albies’ fifth-inning home run was his seventh of the season. He hit six in 57 games last season.

Acuna understands that reaching the majors so early is unusual.

“It’s a dream that not every baseball player gets to enjoy,” he said. “It’s something I take pride in.”

Acuna rose from Class A to Triple-A in 2017, hitting a combined .325 with 21 home runs, 82 RBIs

and 44 stolen bases. Then he was selected MVP of the Arizona Fall League. He began this season as MLB.com’s No. 2 overall prospect behind Angels two-way sensation Shohei Ohtani.

Acuna got Braves fans enthused this spring, batting .432 with four homers, four stolen bases and a 1.247 OPS in 16 exhibition games.

“He’s a talented young man,” Snitser said. “He just needs to let the talent flow and enjoy playing here.”

Acuna said the best piece of advice he ever received was from Seattle second baseman Robinson Cano.

“In this game, you always have to stay positive and never lose faith,” Acuna repeated.

That came in handy when Acuna got off to a slow start in the minors this year. He was hitting .232 with one home run and two RBIs in 69 at-bats with Triple-A Gwinnett.

Gwinnett manager Damon Berryhill told Acuna about the promotion about 11 p.m. in Rochester, Acuna said.

“He called me to his hotel room and said I was getting the call to go to the big leagues,” Acuna said. “I’ve been waiting for this moment, but when I got the call, I was in shock. I didn’t know what to think.”

Outfielder Peter Bourjos was designated for assignment to make room for Acuna on the roster.

By pushing back Acuna’s call-up a few weeks past opening day, the Braves delayed Acuna’s free-agent eligibility until after the 2024 season. Acuna said he believes the extra time was a benefit.

“I think it helped me develop more and be more prepared,” he said.



JOHN MINICILLO/AP

The Braves’ Ronald Acuna Jr. celebrates in the dugout after scoring in the eighth inning Wednesday against the Reds in Cincinnati.

AUTO RACING/GOLF



STEVE HELLER/AP

Kyle Busch has won the past three NASCAR Cup series races and is the points leader heading into Talladega's restrictor-plate race this weekend.



WACE PAYNE/AP

Kevin Harvick won three straight races spanning February and March.

The great equalizer

Wild Talladega could cool off streaking Cup drivers

By JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

The score is tied 3-3 between Kyle Busch and Kevin Harvick in the race for hottest driver in NASCAR. Each has won three races in a row and has been nearly unbeatable through the first nine races of the season.

Up next, though, is Talladega Superspeedway, a wild-card race track that could even the field.

It means Jimmie Johnson, mired in a 32-race losing streak, has a chance to snap the longest winless streak of his career.

Or Ricky Stenhouse Jr. could defend last year's Talladega victory, the first Cup win of his career.

Austin Dillon won the season-opening Daytona 500, and he's got as good a chance as anyone to win Sunday.

Same goes for Brad Keselowski, considered by many of his peers the best restrictor-plate racer in the field right now.

Busch goes to Alabama as the hottest driver in the series and the Cup Series points leader. He's won the last three races — at Texas, Bristol Motor Speedway and Richmond — and has three runner-up finishes through nine races.

"Pretty cool to win three in a row," Busch said after Saturday night's victory at Richmond. "Next week we go to Talladega. I think it's easier to win the Powerball than win at Talladega. We'll give it a go anyway, see what we get."

Talladega should be a crashout with zero guarantees. It was the Team Penske trio of Keselowski, Joey Logano and Ryan Blaney that led Speedweeks in Daytona and cemented themselves as the favorites for the 500. But Keselowski was wrecked out of the race, Blaney was lost in traffic after leading a race-high 118 laps and Logano led the Penske charge with a disappointing fourth-place finish.

With the Penske cars out of contention, the closing laps belonged to resurgent Stewart-Haas Racing. Both Kurt Busch and Aric Almirola had a shot to win the Daytona 500 in overtime and both were wrecked — Almirola by Dillon as they raced for the checkered flag.

Dillon led just one lap, the final one, to earn his Daytona 500 victory.

I think it's easier to win the Powerball than win at Talladega.

Kyle Busch
NASCAR driver

Because Daytona and Talladega are so similar in speed, style and the way the field races in a pack, the dominance shown so far this season by Busch and Harvick may not matter. With 16 spots up for grabs in the playoffs, this is a race where a driver can steal a postseason berth. Only five drivers have qualified for the playoffs through nine races: Harvick and Busch, then Dillon for his Daytona victory, defending series champion Martin Truex Jr. for his win in California and Clint Bowyer for his Martinsville Speedway victory.

Stenhouse, winner at Talladega last spring and Daytona in July, doesn't mind the dominance shown so far by Busch and Harvick because it opens up playoff chances at other circuits.

"[T]he less people win and the more opportunity for somebody like us to get in (to the playoffs) on points if we need to," Stenhouse said. "It doesn't really bother me that a couple people are winning most of the races. Those two are definitely by far the fastest cars out there right now."

Johnson, the seven-time NASCAR champion, has not had one of the fastest cars this year and had a disastrous Speedweeks at Daytona. He crashed in every event and has yet to lead a single lap all year. He's a two-time winner at Talladega and has every reason to believe he can be in the mix Sunday.

But like his Hendrick Motorsports teammates, he's working with a new Camaro that has yet to show much muscle on the track. Dillon's victory in the 500 is the only win this season for the new Chevrolet model, and Kyle Larson in 10th is the highest-ranked Chevy driver.

If there's a chance to put an end to Busch and Harvick's mastery so far this season, it comes Sunday with a wide-open opportunity for another driver to get to Victory Lane.

On the fringe

PGA Tour primed for second half

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

The PGA Tour began the second half of the season at the Texas Open, with Andrew Landry becoming the seventh first-time winner.

Never mind that it feels as though the season is just getting started.

Still to come are three majors and The Players Championship. Not to be overlooked are the FedEx Cup playoffs. Quibble about points and prestige, but they deliver four tournaments over five weeks of the top available players.

Most sports prefer to become more relevant the closer they get to the finish line, so that's one benefit of the PGA Tour's wrap-around season.

The opening 22 weeks featured one major and three World Golf Championships, one of them in Shanghai last October, the other two in March separated by two weeks. Justin Thomas, Bubba Watson and Patton Kizzire are multiple winners. Dustin Johnson should be. Jordan Spieth would settle for one victory at this point.

The first half did a good job setting the table for what should be a compelling five months.

Battle for no. 1

Not long after Dustin Johnson closed with a 67 at the RBC Heritage, he left for the Bahamas as part of a three-week break. His tie for 16th at Hilton Head was important. It assured Johnson of staying at No. 1 for a few more weeks, but maybe not by the time he returns at TPC.

He will be No. 1 for at least 62 weeks, significant in that only three other players have stayed atop the world ranking longer since it began in 1986 — Nick Faldo (81 weeks), Greg Norman (96 weeks) and Tiger Woods (264 weeks and 281 weeks).

It might not last much longer. Thomas, who could have replaced Johnson by winning his semifinal match in the Dell Technologies Match Play, gets another chance next week at the Wells Fargo Championship. That's at Quail Hollow, where Thomas won the PGA Championship last summer. Johnson also had a chance to get to No. 1 in January until a 75-77 weekend at Torrey Pines.

With so many big tournaments coming up, a half-dozen players are in the mix for No. 1 by the end of the season.

Best season

Patrick Reed can easily claim this because of that green jacket he loves to (and should) show off. Winning the Masters makes it a great year no matter what else happens, and Reed will have a hard time topping this one even if he wins all five Ryder Cup match-

es in France.

Three others are worthy of consideration.

Thomas faced a most difficult encore after he won five times last season, including his first major, the PGA Championship, and the FedEx Cup. He has backed it up so far with two victories. One of them was the Honda Classic, where he made two birdies on the par-5 18th — with a wedge to force a playoff, and with a 5-wood to set up the win.

Watson won against two strong fields at Riviera and Match Play. Kizzire won't get as much recognition from winning at the OHL Classic at Mayakoba in the fall and the Sony Open in January. But he went head-to-head in beating Rickie Fowler in Mexico and won a six-hole playoff on Oahu. In a rarity, he won twice in a season while ranked outside the top 100 in the world.

Tiger anniversary

One year ago, the Texas Open was the same week Woods had his fourth back surgery, and all sorts of speculation followed. Would he ever play again? Did he even want to play again? And if he did, how much would fusion surgery limit him?

The answers: Yes, yes and not much.

He recorded a swing speed of 129 mph. He was runner-up by one shot at the Valspar Championship. A year ago, no one would have been surprised if he missed the Masters. Instead, the surprise was he didn't miss a par until Sunday and tied for 32nd.

Interesting about Woods at this point in the season is that he played three of his six tournaments on courses where he has never won.

The revivals

Even as the PGA Tour gets younger, five players in their 40s managed to win.

Phil Mickelson tops the list. Ian Poulter isn't too far behind.

His victory drought approaching five years, Mickelson was on the verge of falling out of the top 50 in the world for the first time in 25 years when he ran off four consecutive top 10s, the last one a playoff victory in the Mexico Championship.

Poulter had gone more than six years without a win, would have lost his full PGA Tour card last year except for a clerical error and then was told at the Dell Match Play that he was in the Masters, when in fact he needed to win one more match (which he lost badly). Poulter opened with a 73 the following week in Houston, answered with birdies of 64-65, made a 30-foot birdie putt on the 18th to force a playoff and won on the first extra hole to get into the Masters.

NFL/NHL



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

The Philadelphia Eagles' Corey Clement, right, catches a touchdown pass in front of the New England Patriots' Marquis Flowers during the second half of Super Bowl 52 on Feb. 4 in Minneapolis.

Elite teams built on late selections

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Eighteen starters in the last Super Bowl were selected in the fourth round or lower, including six players who didn't get a call until the NFL Draft was over.

While first-round picks receive most of the attention and players chosen the first two days of the draft get more money and better job security, success on Day 3 of the draft often separates the elite teams from the good ones.

That was evident when the Philadelphia Eagles and New England Patriots met in February. Corey Clement had 100 yards receiving and one touchdown and LeGarrette Blount ran for 90 yards and one touchdown in Philadelphia's 41-33 victory. Danny Amendola led the Patriots with 152 yards receiving and Chris Hogan had 128.

All four players were undrafted free agents.

The Eagles enter this week with only six picks in the draft and none on Day 2, so there's a bigger emphasis for them to hit on some of their picks in the later rounds and find good-quality rookies in free agency.

It won't be easy, however.

"You would think because we're coming off a Super Bowl and we don't have a second- or third-round pick that it would be a lot easier after the draft," said Joe Douglas, the team's executive vice president of player personnel. "But my experience coming off a Super Bowl, it's sometimes harder to get guys to commit to your roster because agents and players have a perceived notion that it's going to be that much tougher to make your team. It's going to be a challenge for us, and we know it,

and we're going to attack it, and I think our guys are going to do a great job recruiting some of these guys who slip through the cracks like we did last year. But it is going to be a challenge because there's going to be some guys who think there's a tougher shot of making the team."

One way to combat that is to offer more guaranteed money to undrafted rookies. It helped the Eagles snag Clement last year after he ran for 1,375 yards his senior season at Wisconsin.

Tom Brady's story is known, going from sixth-round pick to five-time Super Bowl champion. Three of the offensive linemen blocking for him last year were under-the-radar guys, too.

Center David Andrews was undrafted, and right guard Shaq Mason and right tackle Cameron Fleming were fourth-round picks. Overall, the Patriots had 18 undrafted players on the Super Bowl roster.

The Jaguars, who lost the AFC championship game, got Pro Bowl linebacker Telvin Smith (fifth round, 2014) on

Day 3 of the draft. They also relied on two rookie receivers late in the season: fourth-round pick Dede Westbrook and undrafted Keelan Cole.

"You're looking for those types of nuggets," said Tom Coughlin, Jacksonville's top executive. "You're talking about value. That's what this is all about, so when you get a player in that circumstance and you've done the research on the guy, you know the guy solid and it happens to be that he's there for you, then obviously you feel very good about that."

AP Pro Football Writers Josh Dubow, Teresa M. Walker and Dave Campbell, and AP Sports Writer Mark Long contributed to this report.

Sharks knew early on that Knights are legit

By JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

It took one trip to Las Vegas early in the season for the San Jose Sharks to realize that the fast start to the season for the expansion Golden Knights was no fluke.

So it should come as little surprise to the Sharks that they have to get past Vegas in the second round of the playoffs starting Thursday night to reach the Western Conference final for the fourth time in the past nine seasons.

"I remember playing them in November and walking in and going, 'This isn't a mirage. These guys are real,'" Sharks coach Peter DeBoer said. "Their game was real, the way they came at you, the tenacity they played with, the depth they have. That opinion for me hasn't changed in any of the games we played them, and it went back as far as November when we played them early. Great test for us."

The Golden Knights brought relentless speed to a Pacific Division that had been known in recent years for heavy teams that thrived on wearing down opponents with physical play.

The group of castoffs raced past the rest of the division for 109 points in the regular season and then swept a Los Angeles Kings team that always seemed to be a step behind in the first round of the playoffs.

"We played them a couple of times early and you figured out this team is for real and will be tough for years to come," Sharks defenseman Justin Braun said. "They have great speed and the coach has them going hard. We're going to have to match that every shift."

The Sharks have embraced the league's transition to a faster game in recent years, making it a priority following a loss in the Stanley Cup Final to Pittsburgh two years ago.

The transformation really took hold this season after top-line center Joe Thornton went out with a knee injury in January and the Sharks acquired Evander Kane and Eric Fehr the following month,



ALEX GALLARDO/AP

Vegas Golden Knights defenseman Colin Miller, left, shoots against the Kings during their first-round playoff series in Los Angeles. The Knights face San Jose in the second round.

adding both speed and depth to the forward group that should test the unproven Golden Knights.

"I would assume it'll be a bit more fast-paced a bit, maybe a little more open hockey," Vegas goalie Marc-Andre Fleury said. "I think LA was a team that played well defensively, but they don't create as much offensively. With these guys we're going to have to do a little more up and down."

AP freelancer W.G. Ramirez in Las Vegas contributed to this report.



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

The Sharks' Kevin Labanc, left, dives to clear the puck behind the Vegas Golden Knights' Cody Eakin during the first period of their game on March 22 in San Jose, Calif. It took one trip to Las Vegas early in the season for the San Jose Sharks to realize that the expansion Golden Knights were no fluke.

NHL PLAYOFFS

Bruins roll over Leafs in Game 7

Scoreboard

By JIMMY GOLEN
Associated Press

BOSTON — The Boston Bruins didn't need overtime this time, and they didn't even need all four third-period goals to send the Toronto Maple Leafs home for the summer again.

Five years after an unprecedented rally from a three-goal, third-period deficit to eliminate Toronto in Game 7 of their first-round playoff series, the Bruins scored four straight goals to beat the Maple Leafs 7-4 and advance to the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Rookie Jake DeBrusk scored twice, including the go-ahead goal with 14:35 to play. The Bruins will open the second round in Tampa Bay on Saturday against the Lightning, who finished off New Jersey in five games last Saturday.

"They've had some time to rest, and if they had any injuries, probably get a little healthier," Bruins coach Bruce Cassidy said. "But, that's the advantage of winning in five. ... But we are battle tested now, and we've got to bring that mentality into the next round."

Despite the final score, the teams were tied or separated by one goal for the first 51:59.

"For entertainment value, that was probably one of the better Game 7s you'll see," said Bruins goalie Tuukka Rask, who stopped just 20 of 24 shots. "It was only a one-goal game going into the third and we shut it down and scored some good goals."

Kasperi Kapanen put Toronto ahead 4-3 with a short-handed goal in the second. But Torey Krug tied it early in the third, and DeBrusk gave Boston the lead when he slid the puck through Frederik Andersen's legs right before being flattened by defense-



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Bruins center David Krejci, right, checks Toronto Maple Leafs goaltender Frederik Andersen during the second period of Game 7 of their first-round playoff series Wednesday in Boston. The Bruins won 7-4.

man Jake Gardiner.

DeBrusk slid into the boards on his backside and didn't even have time to climb up off his knees before he was mobbed by teammates.

"Jake had a real coming-out party in the series," Cassidy said. "He scored going to the net, dirty areas. That's always the first thing: play inside, be willing to get hit, fight for your space. That's playoff hockey. They weren't freebies. They've been real greasy, as advertised."

David Pastrnak made it 6-

4 with 8:21 to play, and Brad Marchand flipped one into the empty net with 51 seconds left to set off a celebration in the stands.

Danton Heinen scored his first NHL postseason goal, Patrice Bergeron had a goal and two assists, and David Krejci had three assists for the Bruins. In his first NHL postseason series, DeBrusk had seven points in seven games.

"Uh, it went pretty well," he said sheepishly. "Obviously, with the win it was special — something I'll never forget. I'll never forget this series just in general,

first playoffs. I was really happy to contribute."

Andersen had 29 saves for the Maple Leafs, who have not won a playoff series since 2004. They came close in the first round in 2013, when they rallied from a three-games-to-one deficit against Boston and took a 4-1 lead in Game 7.

"It's always disappointing," said Patrick Marleau, who scored twice for Toronto. "Obviously, you're trying to win the Cup. To fall short once again, it's heart-breaking every time."

Pens, Caps square off for third straight year

By WILL KRAUSE
Associated Press

CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP, Pa. — Sidney Crosby has faced the Washington Capitals three times in the playoffs. All three times the Pittsburgh captain has led his team to victory. And all three times the Penguins used the win as the springboard to a raucous mid-June parade with the Stanley Cup in tow.

Still, Crosby sounded like a cautious investor on Tuesday when asked if Pittsburgh has a mental advantage over rival Alexander Ovechkin and the Capitals heading into yet another postseason showdown in the Eastern Conference semifinals which began Thursday night.

Past performance, the two-time MVP stressed, does not guarantee future results.

"I think it depends on what you do in the series and how you play," Crosby said. "I don't think it plays a huge role. I guess to answer your question, no."

A mantra Crosby's teammates



GENE J. PUSKAS/AP

The Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby lies on the ice after taking a hit from the Washington Capitals' Matt Niskanen on May 1, 2017 during the first period of Game 3 of their Eastern Conference semifinal series. The teams are meeting for the third straight year.

repeated over and over as they prepared for yet another showdown in the black-and-gold sweaters and who is in red, white and blue.

Not that Ovechkin is intimi-

dated. The Capitals star said he "can't wait" to get another shot at the Penguins after spearheading Washington's first-round win over Columbus in six games. That's fine by Pittsburgh, which has played Lucy to Washington's Charlie Brown for more than a quarter century, dangling a potentially deep playoff run in front of the Capitals only to pull it back at the last minute.

The Penguins, however, remain wary. Just because they always beat Washington doesn't mean they're going to always beat Washington. The teams split their four meetings during the regular season, with the Capitals wrapping up their third straight Metropolitan Division title with a 3-1 win in Pittsburgh on April 30.

Of course, none of it matters in the playoffs.

"It's a new year," Pittsburgh defenseman Kris Letang said. "The series is going to play out differently. The game is going to be won differently. You don't know how it is going to go."

First round

(Best-of-seven)

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Tampa Bay 4, New Jersey 1
Tampa Bay 5, New Jersey 2
Tampa Bay 5, New Jersey 3
New Jersey 5, Tampa Bay 2
Tampa Bay 3, New Jersey 1
Tampa Bay 3, New Jersey 1
Boston 4, Toronto 3
Boston 5, Toronto
Boston 7, Toronto 3
Toronto 4, Boston 0
Boston 3, Toronto 1
Toronto 4, Boston 3
Toronto 3, Boston 1

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Washington 4, Columbus 2
Columbus 4, Washington 3, OT
Columbus 5, Washington 4, OT
Washington 3, Columbus 2, 2OT
Washington 4, Columbus 1
Washington 4, Columbus 3, OT
Washington 6, Columbus 3
Pittsburgh 4, Philadelphia 2
Pittsburgh 7, Philadelphia 3, OT
Philadelphia 5, Pittsburgh 1
Pittsburgh 5, Philadelphia 1
Philadelphia 5, Pittsburgh 2
Pittsburgh 8, Philadelphia 5

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Nashville 4, Colorado 2
Nashville 5, Colorado 2
Colorado 5, Nashville 3
Nashville 3, Colorado 2
Colorado 2, Nashville 1
Nashville 5, Colorado 0
Winnipeg 4, Minnesota 1
Winnipeg 3, Minnesota 2
Winnipeg 4, Minnesota 1
Minnesota 6, Winnipeg 2
Winnipeg 2, Minnesota 0
Winnipeg 5, Minnesota 0
Vegas 4, Los Angeles 0
Vegas 1, Los Angeles
Vegas 2, Los Angeles 1, 2OT
Vegas 3, Los Angeles 2
Vegas 1, Los Angeles 0
San Jose 4, Anaheim 0
San Jose 3, Anaheim 2
San Jose 4, Anaheim 1
San Jose 2, Anaheim 1

Conference semifinals

(Best-of-seven; x if necessary)

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Washington vs. Pittsburgh
Thursday, at Washington
Sunday, at Washington
Tuesday, at Pittsburgh
Thursday, May 3; at Pittsburgh
x-Saturday, May 3; at Washington
x-Monday, May 7; at Pittsburgh
x-Wednesday, May 9; at Washington
x-Saturday, May 9; at Tampa Bay
Saturday, at Tampa Bay
Wednesday, May 9; at Boston
Friday, May 4; at Toronto
x-Sunday, May 6; at Tampa Bay
x-Tuesday, May 8; at Boston
x-Thursday, May 10; at Tampa Bay

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Friday, at Boston **APR-Sports 2, 1 a.m. Saturday CET: 8 a.m. Saturday JKT**
Sunday, at Pittsburgh
Tuesday, at Winnipeg
Thursday, May 3; at Winnipeg
x-Saturday, May 5; at Nashville
x-Monday, May 7; at Winnipeg
x-Thursday, May 10; at Nashville
Vegas vs. San Jose
Thursday, at Vegas
Saturday, at Vegas
Monday, at San Jose
Wednesday, May 2; at San Jose
x-Friday, May 4; at Vegas
x-Sunday, May 6; at San Jose
x-Tuesday, May 8; at Vegas

Wednesday

Bruins 7, Maple Leafs 4

Toronto	2	2	0	-4
Boston	3	0	4	-7

First Period—1, Toronto, Marleau (Gardiner, Nylander), 2:05 (pp). 2, Boston, DeBrusk 4 (Krejci, Pastrnak), 4:47 (pp). 3, Toronto, Marleau 4 (Marner), 6:12. 4, Boston, Heinen 1 (RC-Nash, Krejci), 8:10. 5, Boston, Bergeron 1 (Miller), 10:48. 15:23.

Second Period—6, Toronto, Dermott 1 (Nylander, Polak), 2:07. 7, Toronto, Kapanen 1, 6:05 (sh).

Third Period—8, Boston, Krug 2 (Bergeron, Miller), 1:10. 9, Boston, DeBrusk 5 (Krejci), 5:25. 10, Boston, Pastrnak 5 (Marchand, Bergeron), 11:39. 11, Boston, Marchand 3 (RC-Nash), 15:09.

Shots on Goal—Toronto 10-6-24, Boston 12-13-11-36.

Power-play opportunities—Toronto 1 of 2; Boston 1 of 3.

Goals—Toronto, Andersen 3* (35:55, 22:58), Rask 4* (24:20).

A—17,565 (17,565), T—2,445.

Calendar

April 28 NHL Draft lottery, Toronto.
May 27-June 2 — NHL Draft scouting combine, Buffalo, N.Y.
June 1 — Last possible day of Stanley Cup Final.
June 20 — NHL awards, Las Vegas.
June 21-23 — NHL All-Star Game, Las Vegas.
July 1 — Free agency signing period opens.

NHL PLAYOFFS



ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

Boston Bruins defenseman Zdeno Chara, left, complains to an official about a hit on teammate Tommy Wingels, bottom, by Toronto Maple Leafs center Nazem Kadri, right, during Game 1 of their playoff series on April 12. Kadri was suspended three games for the hit.

League explaining discipline decisions

By STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

Drew Doughty watched other playoff games this season and couldn't believe that George Parros, the NHL's discipline czar, had suspended him for a head shot.

"I saw four hits last night that deserved more than that," the Los Angeles Kings defenseman said.

Doughty's one-game suspension was the first of several in the first round for a hit to the head of an opponent. Toronto's Nazem Kadri got three games and Winnipeg's Josh Morrissey and Nashville's Ryan Hartman got one game each. Washington's Tom Wilson and Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov were among those who got off without significant punishment.

The criticism, from Columbus to Colorado and from New Jersey to Los Angeles, was loud enough that the NHL's department of player safety put out a video last week explaining its reasoning for suspending Doughty and Hartman but not Kucherov or Predators center Ryan Johansen.

"The illegal check to the head rule is often misunderstood or misstated," the league said in the video. "Illegal checks to the head and legal full body hits often look similar at first glance because the difference between legal and illegal can be a matter of inches in a sport that moves fast."

Discontent over the goalie interference rule has been grabbing headlines for weeks, but the head shot discussion carries far more serious implications for a league still grappling with how best to protect its players. What's acceptable has evolved from the early days of hockey through Scott Stevens' then-legal crushing blow on Eric Lindros in 2000 to today, where checks to the head are parsed frame-by-frame to determine if a line was crossed. The NHL, too, is still facing a federal class-action concussion lawsuit filed by former players alleging it failed to warn them about the health risks associated with head injuries.

Meeting with Associated Press Sports Editors last week, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman insisted there was nothing new about the subject. Asked about player safety, Bettman said Parros is off to a good start in the former enforcer's first season as vice president of player safety. He said he is proud of player safety's transparency in the form of videos detailing the reasons for suspending a player.

"Sometimes we get accused of splitting hairs, but that's exactly what they have to do," Bettman said. "I think he's reached the appropriate conclusion when it's been a hockey play that doesn't transcend the rules and I think he's been appropriately punitive in cases where it warranted it. There's never going to be a shortage of critics of what they do."

Doughty, a finalist for the Norris Trophy as the league's top defenseman, said he hit Vegas forward William Carrier's shoulder first before his head in Game 1. Kings coach John Stevens added: "As long as I'm on the earth, I'm going to agree to disagree with that decision."

The league video emphasized that an illegal check to the head concerns a player's head being the main point of contact, not the first point of contact. Based on experience, the league said, a player's head snapping back on these kinds of hits indicates significant head contact.

"I watch as a fan to make sure they make sense," Bettman said. "I want to make sure the videos we send out are clear."

"I think player safety as a whole has done an extraordinarily good job of changing the culture," Bettman said. "We have players not making certain types of hits anymore. We have players who are more accountable for their conduct and understand it and I believe that they've been consistent."

AP Sports Writer Teresa M. Walker in Nashville, Tenn., and Sports Deputy Editor for NewsGathering Howie Rumberg in New York contributed.

Lured out of retirement, Fisher chasing first Cup

And this Nashville team may be his best chance

By TERESA M. WALKER
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Losing the Stanley Cup last June wasn't what hurt Nashville Predators forward Filip Forsberg the most. Seeing how painful the loss was for veteran center Mike Fisher proved even more agonizing.

"That was probably the worst feeling for me personally," Forsberg said. "Seeing the look on Fish's face, how close it was and obviously didn't know then if he had another chance. And yeah, he's definitely one of the guys that I would love to win for."

One final shot at the Stanley Cup that's eluded Fisher throughout his 17-year career wasn't the priority last August when the 37-year-old center announced his retirement. The Predators, who always wanted him back, persuaded him to return late in the season with some help from Fisher's wife, country star Carrie Underwood.

Fisher says the support means a lot to him.

"It also means you're getting old, too," Fisher quipped.

"You don't have too many chances. But part of this coming back, too, wasn't just about me, it was about the guys, too, and you figure try to help a group and do it together," Fisher said. "That's the thing about team sports and hockey is just having that fun together. There's nothing like it. So it's definitely more than just about me, the old guy, winning. It's so much greater than that for sure."

Nashville wanted Fisher back for his skills on the ice and his experience.

Fisher can play both ends of the ice and can win face-off battles in the defensive zone. He also has played 1,104 regular-season games in his career. In this postseason, only Toronto's Patrick Marleau (182) and San Jose's Joe Thornton (160) have played more postseason games than Fisher (140) without winning a Stanley Cup.

The 6-foot-1 center now is in the playoffs with a Presidents' Trophy winner. After finishing off Colo-



JACK DEMPSEY/AP

Nashville Predators goaltender Pekka Rinne, left, and Mike Fisher celebrate their 5-0 series-clinching victory over the Colorado Avalanche in Game 6 of their first-round playoff series Sunday.

rado in six games Sunday night, Nashville awaits a showdown with the Winnipeg Jets in the second round.

Fisher announced his return at a news conference Jan. 31. He spent February working his way back into shape and signed a one-year, \$1 million deal for the rest of the season Feb. 26 when NHL rosters expanded at the trade deadline. Fisher, who had 18 goals and 24 assists last season, scored in his first game back, a 4-3 win in Vancouver on March 2.

Against Colorado, Fisher centered Nashville's fourth line. He averaged 11 minutes, 16 seconds per game in the first round while winning 75.5 percent of his face-offs.

Forsberg said Fisher looked like himself from his first game back and obviously is more comfortable with each game.

"Really good guy to have around the team," Forsberg said, "and he's been awesome."



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Nashville Predators center Mike Fisher, front, picks up a loose puck in front of Colorado Avalanche center Tyson Jost. In his 17th season, Fisher came out of retirement in February.

BASKETBALL

It's time to wait on NBA decisions

Draft declaration deadline gone, now it's up to agentless players to weigh their options

By Aaron Beard
Associated Press

The deadline has passed for college players to declare early for the NBA Draft. Now it's time to wait for the draft entrants who didn't hire an agent to decide whether they're staying in or heading back to school.

The early-entry deadline was Sunday night. The next date to watch is May 30 — 10 days after the conclusion of the NBA Draft combine — as the last day for draft entrants who didn't hire an agent to withdraw and return to school to keep their remaining eligibility.

Players testing the waters can work out for NBA teams to learn what they need to improve or whether they could be a first-round pick on June 21.

Here's a look at some key names, none of whom are sure-fire first-rounders, facing decisions that could have a big impact on next season:

ACC backcourts: Boston College and Clemson have a lot riding on what happens next.

High-scoring guard Jerome Robinson (second in the Atlantic Coast Conference at 20.7 points per game) and point guard Ky Bowman (17.6) helped the Eagles take a big step with 19 wins — three more than the previous two seasons combined. If they return, Boston College could have nearly its entire team back as it chases the program's first NCAA bid since 2009.

The Tigers await decisions from leading scorer Marquise Reed (15.8 points) and starting guard Shelton Mitchell (12.2 points) after the duo helped Clemson reach the NCAA Sweet 16 for the first time since 1997.

Tyus Battle, Syracuse: The 6-foot-6 guard is a possible first-round pick who racked up the minutes — a national-high 39 per game — while increasing his scoring average from 7.4 as a freshman to a team-best 19.2 last season. Battle helped the Orange make an unexpected run to the NCAA Tournament's Sweet 16, but Syracuse sure could use him back next year after top recruit Darius Bazley decided to skip school and head to the G-League.

Brian Bowen, South Carolina: Bowen has yet to play in college after getting tangled in the federal corruption investigation into college basketball.

The 6-7 forward originally landed at Louisville before being suspended after news of an alleged payment involving the Cardinals and his father to get him to join that school. Bowen has denied

knowledge and since transferred to South Carolina, where he practiced and participated in pregame warmups but has yet to be cleared by the NCAA.

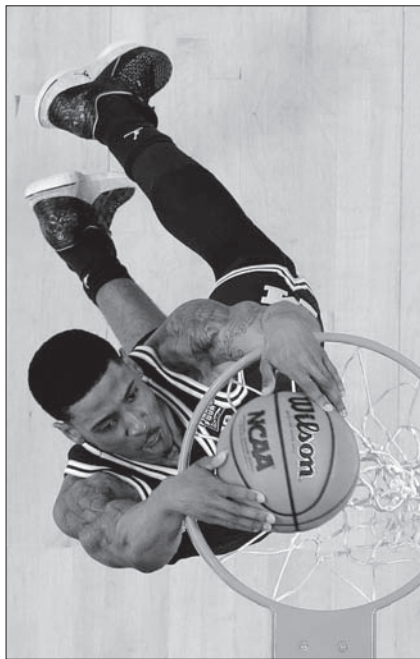
The move at least gives the McDonald's All-American another option if the college route appears unlikely to work.

Donte DiVincenzo, Villanova: The Final Four's most outstanding player certainly ended the season in forgettable style with 31 points in the title-game win against Michigan that gave Villanova a second national title in three seasons. He averaged 13.4 points and 4.8 rebounds to offer plenty of scoring punch off the bench.

Villanova will take a big hit with the departures of Associated Press national player of the year Jalen Brunson and Mikal Bridges to the NBA, but Phil Booth and Eric Paschall are returning for their senior seasons. And if DiVincenzo and Omari Spellman (another agent-free draft declaration) join them, Villanova will bring back four double-digit scorers to chase coach Jay Wright's third title.

Carsen Edwards, Purdue: The 6-1 junior was a third-team AP All-American and the Jerry West Award winner as the nation's top shooting guard after leading the veteran Boilermakers in scoring (18.5) while shooting nearly 41 percent from three-point range.

If Edwards stays in the draft, the Boilermakers will lose their top five scorers from a 30-win team — leaving Matt Haarms as the top returnee with a 4.8-point



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

Michigan's Charles Matthews dunks during the NCAA national championship game against Villanova. The 6-6 guard started every game for the Wolverines, averaging 13 points and 5.5 rebounds. With Moe Wagner leaving a year early for the NBA, the former Kentucky transfer is set for a starring role next year, unless he joins Wagner in the NBA.

average.

Caleb and Cody Martin, Nevada: The 6-7 twin juniors had a big impact after transferring from North Carolina State. Caleb Martin averaged 18.9 points and shot 45 percent, while Cody aver-

aged 14 points and shot roughly 52 percent in helping the Wolf Pack reach the NCAA Sweet 16 for the first time since 2004.

The Martins and junior Jordan Caroline (17.7 points) all announced in social media posts on April 3 that they were testing the NBA Draft waters. Their returns could set Nevada up for another memorable March.

Charles Matthews, Michigan: The 6-6 guard started every game for the Wolverines, averaging 13 points and 5.5 rebounds to help Michigan reach the NCAA championship game. With Moe Wagner leaving a year early for the NBA, the former Kentucky transfer is set for the starring role as the Wolverines chase a third straight Big Ten championship.

Luke Maye, North Carolina: The 6-8 junior went from role player to inside-out leading man, averaging 16.9 points and 10.1 rebounds to become a third-team AP All-American. Maye's return would give the Tar Heels three returning starters to go with the program's best recruiting class in years.

Admiral Schofield, Tennessee: The 6-5, 238-pound forward averaged 13.9 points and 6.4. If he returns, Tennessee would lose only two reserves from a 26-win team that won a share of the Southeastern Conference regular-season title.

Budenholzer out as coach of Hawks

By Charles Odum
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Mike Budenholzer wanted to coach elsewhere. The Atlanta Hawks finally agreed it's a good idea.

The Hawks and Budenholzer mutually agreed to part ways Wednesday in a move announced by the team in a three-sentence statement.

The decision was not totally unexpected as Budenholzer was granted permission to interview with other teams even though he is under contract with the Hawks for two more seasons.

According to multiple reports, Budenholzer interviewed with the Phoenix Suns for their vacant coaching position last week before withdrawing his name from consideration. Budenholzer now may be a top candidate to coach the New York Knicks.

Budenholzer was 213-192 in the regular season and 17-22 in the playoffs in five seasons with Atlanta. The Hawks were an Eastern Conference-worst 24-58 this season.

The Hawks' free-fall from a franchise-record 60 wins only three years ago to the bottom of the conference this season was startling. The team's streak of 10 straight playoff seasons ended, but Budenholzer still carried the respect needed to earn interest from other teams looking for a coach.

Even this season, when the Hawks tied with Dallas for the NBA's third-worst record, they were rarely blown out. They lost 21 games by fewer than 10 points, with only seven losses by 20 or more points.

Always passionate on the bench, at times to the point of earning rebukes from officials, Budenholzer showed no sign of giving up on the team.

"I love what I do," Budenholzer said on April 11, one day after the end of the disappointing regular season. "I love this team. I'm focused on what we just did and how we can get better going forward."

Golden State coach Steve Kerr, who played for the Spurs when Budenholzer was Gregg Popovich's longtime assistant, said last month he has borrowed from Budenholzer's strategy.

"I didn't really pick his brain but I definitely picked his play book," Kerr said. "I really did. Some of that is through Pop. They ran a lot of the San Antonio stuff when they got here to Atlanta. That's the derivative.... He's taken a lot of that San Antonio stuff and expanded on it and I've definitely stolen some stuff from him."

Budenholzer was named NBA coach of the year for the 2014-15 season, when he led the Hawks to their first 60-win season, a division title and their first appearance in the Eastern Conference finals.

The Hawks scheduled a news conference with general manager Travis Schlenk for Thursday.



WILFREDO LEE/AP

Syracuse guard Tyus Battle entered his name in the NBA Draft, but he's didn't hire an agent. He's a possible first-round pick, but the Orange sure could use him back next season.

NBA



Rockets guard James Harden, left, blocks the shot of Timberwolves center Karl-Anthony Towns on Wednesday in Houston.

Scoreboard

First round (Best-of-seven; x if necessary)	
Eastern Conference	
Toronto 3, Washington 2	
Toronto 14, Washington 106	
Washington 130, Washington 103	
Washington 106, Toronto 98	
Washington 106, Toronto 98	
Western Conference	
Friday: at Washington	
X-Sunday: at Toronto	
Boston 3, Milwaukee 2	
Boston 115, Milwaukee 107	
Boston 120, Milwaukee 106	
Milwaukee 116, Boston 98	
Milwaukee 104, Boston 102	
Boston 92, Milwaukee 87	
Thursday: at Milwaukee	
X-Saturday: at Boston	
Philadelphia 4, Miami 1	
Philadelphia 130, Miami 103	
Philadelphia 104, Miami 108	
Philadelphia 106, Miami 108	
Philadelphia 104, Miami 91	
Cleveland 3, Indiana 2	
Cleveland 100, Indiana 97	
Cleveland 99, Cleveland 90	
Cleveland 104, Indiana 100	
Wednesday: Cleveland 98, Indiana 95	
Friday: at Indiana	
X-Sunday: at Cleveland	
Houston 4, Minnesota 1	
Houston 108, Minnesota 101	
Houston 102, Minnesota 82	
Houston 121, Houston 105	
Houston 119, Minnesota 100	
Wednesday: Houston 122, Minnesota 104	
Golden State 4, San Antonio 1	
Golden State 113, San Antonio 92	
Golden State 116, San Antonio 101	
Golden State 110, San Antonio 97	
San Antonio 103, Golden State 90	
Golden State 99, San Antonio 91	
New Orleans 4, Portland 0	
New Orleans 97, Portland 95	
New Orleans 111, Portland 102	
New Orleans 119, Portland 102	
Utah 3, Oklahoma City 2	
Oklahoma City 116, Utah 106	
Oklahoma City 104, Utah 101	
Utah 115, Oklahoma City 102	
Utah 103, Oklahoma City 99	
Wednesday: Oklahoma City 107, Utah 99	
Friday: at Utah	
X-Sunday: at Oklahoma City	

Conference semifinals

(Best-of-seven; x if necessary)	
Western Conference	
New Orleans 5, Golden State 2	
Saturday: at Golden State	
Rest of schedule TBA	
Wednesday	
Raptors 108, Wizards 98	
Washington 108, Toronto 99	
Morris 2-8 2-2 6, Grant 4-2 9-2 10, Wall 10-21 6-7 26, Beal 8-20 1-2 20, Oubre Jr. 3-17 14 11-25 (DeRozan 9-4, 4-14, Lowry 7-13 0-12 17, DeRozan 12-24 5-6 32, Powell 0-10 0-0 0, Miles 2-7 2-8, Siakam 1-22 2-4, Westbrook 1-1, Wright 6-10 4-18, Totals 38-82 21-28 108.	
23 23 31 20-98	
Toronto	
Three-point goals—Washington 5-26 (Beal 3-8, Scott 1-1, Oubre Jr. 1-7, Lowry 0-1, Morris 0-2, Porter Jr. 0-3, Wall 0-4, Thomas 11-25 (DeRozan 9-4, 4-14, Lowry 3-6, Wright 2-2, Miles 2-7, Anunoby 1-4, Powell 0-1, Ibaka 1-1, Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Washington 30 (Scott 12), 35 (Valanciunas 13), Assists—Washington 21 (Wright 9, Toronto 26 (Lowry 10), Total Fouls—Washington 18, Toronto 18. A—19,887 (19,800).	

Rockets 122, Twolves 104

MINNESOTA — Wiggins 5-14 3-6 14, Gibson 5-7 0-0 10, Towns 9-14 4-4 23, Teague 1-4 2-4 17, Butler 4-10 0-0 8, Georges-Hunt 0-0 0-0 6, Belicka 0-0 0-0 0, Dieng 0-0 0-0 0, Rose 3-7 4-4 12, Jones 0-0 0-0 0, Crawford 8-10 2-2 20, Totals 40-79 15-20 104.	
HOUSTON — Ariza 5-11 2-12 26, Tucker 5-8 0-0 15, Capela 12-14 2-4 26, Paul 6-16 1-2 12, Harden 8-21 4-4 24, Anderson 2-3 0-0 5, Black 0-0 0-0 0, O'Quinn 0-0 0-0 0, 1-2 2-2, Jackson 0-0 0-0 0, Gordon 5-11 6-15, Green 1-2 0-0 3, Totals 45-88 14-19 122.	
Minnesota 25 33 35 10-104	
Houston 25 30 30 37-122	
Three-point goals—Minnesota 9-19 (Towns 3-5, Crawford 2-3, Rose 2-2, Towns 1-2, Wiggins 1-4, Jones 0-1, Butler 0-1), Houston 18-44 (Harden 5-14, Ariza 4-10, Gordon 3-7, Anderson 1-2, Green 1-2, Paul 0-5, Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Minnesota 30 (Towns 14, Houston 40 (Capela 15), Assists—Minnesota 23 (Teague 7), Houston 29 (Harden 12), Total Fouls—Minnesota 18, Houston 17, Technicals—Crawford, A—18,055 (18,055).	

Thunder 107, Jazz 99

UTAH — Ingles 5-11 2-2 16, Favors 2-3 6-8 10, Gobert 3-8 5-6 11, Rubio 4-14 0-10, Mitchell 9-22 4-4 23, O'Neale 0-0 0-0 0, Crowder 9-19 3-4 27, Jerebko 0-0 0-0 0, Udoh 1-0 0-0 2, Exum 0-0 0-0 0, Totals 33-81 20-26 99.	
OKLAHOMA CITY — George 12-26 8-10 34, Anthony 2-9 3-4 7, Adams 2-2 2-2 6, Westbrook 17-39 6-45, Brewer 2-4 0-0 5, Huestis 0-1 1-2 1, Grant 2-2 0-0 4, Patterson 0-0 0-0 0, Felton 1-2 0-0 2, Abrines 1-3 0-0 3, Totals 39-89 10-24 107.	
Utah 24 22 21 33-81	
Oklahoma City 29 12 37 29-107	
Three-point goals—Utah 13-38 (Crowder 1-4, Ingles 4-8, Rubio 2-5, Mitchell 1-7, O'Neale 0-3), Oklahoma City 9-21 (Westbrook 5-9, George 2-6, Brewer 1-2, Abrines 1-2, Anthony 0-2), Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Utah 46 (Rubio 12), Oklahoma City 44 (Westbrook 12), Assists—Utah 19 (Rubio 7), Oklahoma City 13 (Westbrook 7), Total Fouls—Utah 24, Oklahoma City 21, Technicals—Crowder, Oklahoma City coach, 18 (Donovan, Adams, A—18,033 (18,033).	

Cavaliers 98, Pacers 95

INDIANA — Bogdanovic 4-9 0-0 11, Tyus 8-9 0-1 16, Turner 3-4 2-2 8, Collison 1-2 0-4 0, Oladipo 2-5 0-2 12, Booker 2-3 0-4, Sabonis 8-12 4-6 22, Joseph 2-6 2-6, Stephenson 4-8 2-2 12, Totals 34-71 21-27 95.	
CLEVELAND — Smith 0-0 0-0 0, James 14-15 15-44, Love 2-11 2-11, Calderon 2-6 0-6, Korver 6-11 2-2 19, Nance Jr. 2-2 2-5, Green 2-3 0-0 2, Hoad 1-4 2-4 2, Clarkson 2-5 0-4 0, Totals 31-75 27-88 98.	
Indiana 25 31 37 22-95	
Cleveland 25 31 35 27-98	
Three-point goals—Indiana 6-20 (Bogdanovic 3-5, Stephenson 2-4, Oladipo 1-2), Cleveland 10-32 (Korver 5-9, Calderon 2-5, Green 1-2, Love 1-4, Hoad 0-1, Clarkson 0-1, Smith 0-6), Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Indiana 34 (Oladipo 12), Cleveland 37 (Love, James 10), Assists—Indiana 23 (Joseph 6), Cleveland 16 (James 6), Total Fouls—Indiana 22, Cleveland 21. A—20,582 (20,582).	

Playoffs scoring leaders

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
James, CLE	5	60	47	174	34.8
Dan, NGR	4	49	28	105	26.3
Harden, HOU	5	46	33	145	29.0
Clayton, OKC	4	46	28	120	30.0
George, OKC	4	47	30	143	28.6
Durant, GOL	4	48	35	141	28.2
Westbrook, OKC	4	47	27	138	27.0
Mitchell, UTA	5	52	18	131	26.2
Wall, WAS	5	47	36	133	26.6

Rockets boot T-wolves

By KRISTIE RIEKEN
Associated Press

HOUSTON — James Harden had another huge third quarter to propel the Houston Rockets to their latest win, and coach Mike D'Antoni wants to know what's behind those scoring bursts.

"When you do talk to him about it, would you let me know, because I'm dying in the first half. My health is an issue," D'Antoni said with a laugh.

Clint Capela had 26 points and 15 rebounds, Harden added 24 points and the Rockets pulled away in the third quarter to get another lopsided win and eliminate the Minnesota Timberwolves with a 122-104 victory in Game 5 of the first-round series Wednesday night.

The top-seeded Rockets are headed to the second round for the second year in a row after taking care of the eighth-seeded Timberwolves, Minnesota was in the postseason for the first time since 2004.

Houston will await the winner of the Utah-Oklahoma City series, which the Jazz lead 3-2 after the Thunder rallied from a big deficit Wednesday night to avoid elimination.

After scoring 22 points in Houston's 50-point third quarter in a Game 4 blowout Monday night, Harden poured in half of Houston's 30 points in the third quarter Wednesday night to put the Rockets up for good. His 15 third-quarter points matched Minnesota's output in the frame, and he finished with 12 assists.

"I know that Minnesota wasn't going to just go away," he said. "We had to do the right things to put them away."

Karl-Anthony Towns led the Timberwolves with 23 points and 14 rebounds, and Jamal Crawford added 20 points off the bench.

"It's a major jump from where we were two years ago," coach Tom Thibodeau said. "We have to take all the things we learned this past season and make a commitment to continue to improve."

Paul and Harden both raved about the work of Capela, who throughout the series has outshined Towns, an All-Star this season and the top overall pick in 2015.

Thunder avoid elimination

By CLIFF BRUNT
Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Russell Westbrook unleashed the same fury he had in Game 4, just a little more efficiently this time.

Westbrook was controlled, and he was too much for Utah. Silent and serious, the reigning league MVP scored 33 of his 45 points in the second half, and the Oklahoma City Thunder rallied from 25 points down to fight off elimination and beat the Jazz 107-99 in Game 5 on Wednesday night.

"It was win or go home," Westbrook said. "Regardless of what is going on in the game, you have to give yourself a chance to win, and I thought our guys did a good job of that tonight. They did an amazing job of sticking together."

Westbrook got sidetracked during Monday's Game 4 by a one-on-one matchup with Ricky Rubio. He was in foul trouble for much of Oklahoma City's loss and was later fined \$10,000 and assessed a technical for an altercation late in the game.

With Oklahoma City trailing 3-1 in the series, he focused up in Game 5 and helped keep the season alive. He made 5 of 16 shots in the first half, then 12 of 23 in the second.

"He opens up everything for us because he's such a threat when he rolls to the rim," Paul said.

Towns believes his experience of his first trip to the postseason will help him move forward.

"We hadn't been there in like 14 years so it was experience that needed to be garnered and we wanted to take that next step," he said. "We came up short tonight but we're very confident in ourselves leading up to next year."

Andrew Wiggins scored the last four points of the third quarter to cut the lead to 85-74 entering the fourth quarter. The Rockets used a 7-2 spurt, highlighted by a three from Ryan Anderson, to start the fourth and make it 92-76 with 9½ minutes left.

A basket by Derrick Rose got Minnesota within 14 later in the fourth when Houston went on a 10-4 run to push the lead to 108-88 with less than five minutes to go.

The Wolves got consecutive threes by Jamal Crawford and Wiggins to cut the lead after that, but the Rockets scored the next five points to end that run and cruise to the victory.

The Rockets opened the second half with a 10-2 run to erase a halftime deficit and take a 65-61 lead with about nine minutes left in the third. Paul, who finished with 12 points and nine assists, had four points in that stretch and Harden and P.J. Tucker added three points.

Minnesota scored the next five points to go back on top, but Harden scored five quick points after that to leave the Rockets ahead 70-66. Harden, who had just five points at halftime, hit a three before throwing down a one-handed dunk over Taj Gibson that prompted Minnesota Thibodeau to call a timeout.

The timeout didn't do anything to slow Harden and the Rockets, and he added another three on Houston's first possession after the timeout.

Towns added a basket after that before Houston scored the next eight points to extend the lead to 81-68 with 2½ minutes left in the quarter.

Things got a little testy after that when Crawford pushed Paul to the court and stood over him jawing. Paul got to his feet and got in his face, but the two were quickly separated and Crawford was given an offensive foul and a technical.

out what went wrong, but from my analysis right after the game, we just stopped getting back in transition and they just fed off of that."

Jae Crowder scored a career playoff-high 27 points, Mitchell had 23 and Joe Ingles added 16 for the Jazz, who still have a 3-2 lead in the series.

They realize it probably should already be over.

"We need to do a better job," Rubio said. "Of course, you have to give them credit. They made a lot of shots. They took their pride and forced a Game 6. But we are going home and we've got to be strong and be confident."

Oklahoma City took advantage after Utah's post players, Rudy Gobert and Derrick Favors, got into foul trouble. Both finished with five fouls, and Oklahoma City was able to get to the basket consistently for the first time in the series.

Gobert's absence, in particular, caused problems.

"It's a different feeling when you don't have big fella back there," Mitchell said. "It's hard that we put all the pressure on him. We have had success but eventually it's not going to work and we have to play better defense as guards ourselves."

SUE OGROCK/AP

Thunder guard Russell Westbrook scored 45 points Wednesday to lead Oklahoma City past the Utah Jazz in Game 5 of their first-round playoff series in Oklahoma City.

Westbrook also had 15 rebounds and seven assists. Paul George added 34 points and eight rebounds for the Thunder, who forced a Game 6 in Salt Lake City on Friday.

NBA PLAYOFFS

Bucks' Maker among reserves stepping up

Bench guys making most of playing time

By GENARO C. ARMAS

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Thon Maker is having his biggest games at the biggest time of the year.

Not bad for a bench guy and someone who, as recently as last week, was a roster afterthought.

Maker had never blocked five shots in any NBA game before this postseason began — and now he's blocked that many in each of the last two playoff contests for the Milwaukee Bucks. There's an old coaching adage that tells players to stay ready, because they never know when their chance to make an impact has arrived.

Maker is proving that axiom to be correct.

"Just trying to be there for my teammates, playing aggressive," said Maker, the Bucks' backup center. "It's the playoffs. These are the moments everybody plays for. You've got to find a way to win, you've got to find a way to impact the game. I try to do that every single time."

Maker is almost an out-of-nowhere story for the Bucks, who've pulled even with the Boston Celtics four games into their Eastern Conference first-round series in large part because of a defensive resurgence by the bench. His offense has helped, too: Maker scored 14 points in a Game 3 victory, his highest total since a 16-point effort on New Year's Day.

There have been some big games from reserve players in these playoffs already: Miami has gotten games of 28 and 25 points from Dwyane Wade and a 26-point effort from Kelly Olynyk, Philadelphia has seen Marco

Belinelli reach 21 points twice so far, and Boston saw Greg Monroe get a double-double against the Bucks in only 23 minutes.

Backups can find themselves in the spotlight quickly if they get hot.

"When we step on the floor, we need to be assertive with what we do," Bucks coach Joe Prunty said. "We can't be a step behind."

Toronto had one of the top bench units in the NBA during the regular season, ranking fifth in the league with a combined 41.8 scoring average. But in the East's No. 1 seed's first-round series, the Raptors' reserve scoring dropped to 34.5 points.

They're up 3-2 in the series with the eighth-seeded Washington Wizards, whose bench scoring is up in the series by about the same margin to 34.3 points. The Wizards were just 16th in bench scoring this season.

A big reason for Toronto's problems has been the absence of backup point guard Fred VanVleet, who has an injured right shoulder and played just three minutes so far, sitting out four of the five games entirely. Raptors coach Dwane Casey blamed his team's high turnover totals — 37 over Games 3 and 4, both losses — in large part on its reserves, who he also thought were not as productive with the ball as they could have been.

"The second unit turned down some shots that they normally take," Casey said. "I thought that group started the turnovers. The leave broke on those guys. I've got to do a better job of putting them in the right situation where they don't turn it over."



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Bucks center Thon Maker passes the ball under pressure from Celtics forward Marcus Morris, left, on Tuesday in Boston.

New Orleans forward Anthony Davis reacts after making a three-pointer during Game 4 of his team's first-round playoff series earlier this month in Portland, Ore. Davis averaged 33 points per game as the Pelicans swept the third-seeded Trail Blazers.

Scott Threlkeld/AP



Foundation: Davis' star power growing

FROM BACK PAGE

"There's always, you know, 'You can't win in a small market or you can't get noticed in a small market,' but then you look at those guys and they've won and been well recognized in their respective teams," Davis said, referring to Miller and Duncan. "I love the city of New Orleans. I love playing for the city. The city's showed me a lot of love, so I couldn't ask for a better place to be."

New Orleans is noticing. So, apparently, is the rest of the world.

Sharp-shooting forward Nikola Mirotic, a Montenegro native acquired by the Pelicans in a mid-season trade, said Davis already has enhanced New Orleans' international profile because of the NBA's global appeal.

"I know in my country, for example — or Spain, or Serbia — they all talk about him. They all want to see him playing because of the show he puts on," Mirotic said. "He's still young. There's a lot of room for him to improve. I'm sure he's going to be someone that everybody is going to remember in the future."

Saints quarterback Drew Brees remains New Orleans' most popular athlete. But Davis' rising global star power is on full display.

The Pelicans' home arena, the Smoothie King Center, was packed to the rafters and deafeningly loud during games 3 and 4 of sixth-seeded New Orleans' somewhat surprising first-round sweep of the third-seeded Portland Trail Blazers. The series victory not only was New Orleans' first since 2008, but only the second since the NBA returned 16 seasons ago to the city where the Pete Maravich-led Jazz originally played from 1974-79, before moving to Utah.

Davis averaged 33 points, 12 rebounds and nearly three blocks per game during the first round of the playoffs, earning him constant "M-V-P" chants from fans — who hope this is just the start.

"We would want this to be something that changes the mindset of not just what we do here, but also of other people looking to come here," said Pelicans forward Solomon Hill, who joined Davis as a free agent in 2016. "From player personnel to the front office, whatever it may be, we're trying to let everybody know that New Orleans is a place where we're trying to win — and he's the key piece you need."

Sitting on the bench in street clothes and a walking boot watching Davis these days is fellow All-Star DeMarcus Cousins, who is due to become a free agent this offseason. The Pelicans have said they'll

'I know that his goal is to be the foundation of a team that wins consistently here.'

Alvin Gentry

New Orleans Pelicans coach, on Anthony Davis

try to re-sign Cousins, who technically is now part of his first playoff team in eight NBA seasons, but who still has yet to play in the postseason because of his Achilles tear in January.

Davis said he hopes the way the Pelicans played, and the way fans cheered, in the first round gives Cousins "a little itch to come back."

New Orleans hardly looked like a playoff lock in the highly competitive Western Conference after Cousins was injured. But Davis averaged an NBA-high 30.2 points during the last 34 regular-season games, with the Pelicans going 21-13.

Unlike when Paul was in New Orleans, the Pelicans are now on sound financial footing, with the same local ownership as the NFL's Saints. They have a modern, spacious, permanent practice facility on the same campus as Saints headquarters and a team-friendly arena lease that runs through 2024.

Davis is under contract for three more seasons.

"I know that his goal is to be the foundation of a team that wins consistently here," coach Alvin Gentry said. "With the talent-level that he is and the way he can make other guys better just by being on the court with them, I see no reason why that can't happen."

Guard Jrue Holiday, who had 33 points in Game 2 and 41 in Game 4, is under contract for four more seasons. Veteran guard Rajon Rondo, who won a title in Boston with a "Big Three" of Paul Pierce, Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen, said he came to New Orleans on a one-year deal to play with the "Big Three" of Davis, Cousins and Holiday. During the playoffs, Rondo has emerged as the club's third star, piling up 53 assists in four games.

Davis wants Rondo back next year as well, and very well may get his wish.

"We just can't make this a one-every-three-years or one-every-two-years" playoff run, Davis said. "It needs to be a consistent thing where before every season they're talking about: These are the top five teams that we know are going to be in the top five — and we need to be one of them."

NBA PLAYOFFS

James bails out Cavaliers with buzzer-beater

Pacers facing elimination at home Friday in Game 6

By TOM WITHERS
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The game, the series, the season and perhaps Cleveland's future were in jeopardy.

LeBron James saved everything. James dropped a three-pointer at the buzzer, a crowning moment for another one of his brilliant performances, to give Cleveland a 98-95 victory over the Indiana Pacers on Wednesday night in Game 5, putting the Cavaliers within one victory of advancing in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Moments after blocking Victor Oladipo's possible go-ahead layup — a play the Pacers felt was goaltending — James caught the inbound pass, took two dribbles and hit his winner over Thaddeus Young.

As Cleveland's sellout crowd exploded, James hugged rookie teammate Cedi Osman before jumping on the scorer's table to celebrate another of those moments that will define a career he dreamed of while growing up in Akron.

"As a kid you always have those 3, 2, 1 moments and that's what it kind of felt like," James said. "I felt like I was a kid all over again playing basketball at my house on makeshift hoops and my socks as a basketball."

James finished with 44 points, 10 rebounds, eight assists and went 15 of 15 from the line.

"He does it at both ends every single night," Cavs forward Kevin Love said. "That's why he's the best player in the world."

Kyle Korver added 19 points and Cleveland's much-maligned defense tightened just in time as the Cavaliers seized their first lead in the first-round series after being down 1-0 and 2-1.

Cleveland can close out Indiana with a win Friday night in Indianapolis.



TONY DEJAK/AP

The Cavaliers' LeBron James, right, celebrates with teammate Cedi Osman after James hit the game-winning three point shot during Game 5 of their first-round playoff series against the Indiana Pacers on Wednesday in Cleveland. The Cavaliers won 98-95.

But while James' shot will long be remembered, the Pacers were stinging from his block they felt was illegal.

With the score tied at 95-all, Oladipo, who shot just 2-for-15, drove the left side and was at the rim when James swooped in for a block on a play reminiscent of his Game 7 block on Andre Iguodala in the 2016 NBA Finals.

However, Oladipo thought his shot hit the

backboard first, and goaltending should have been called. TV replays showed the ball appear to hit the glass before James touched it.

"I got a step on him and I felt I even got grabbed," said Oladipo, who has struggled on just 12-for-50 shooting from the field in the last three games. "It hit the backboard and he blocked it. It was a goaltend. It's hard to even speak on it. That layup is

huge."

James smiled when asked about the play.

"Of course I didn't think it was a goaltend," he said with a laugh. "I try to make plays like that all the time. He made a heck of a move, got me leaning right and he went left and I just tried to use my recovery speed and get back up there and make a play on the ball."



FRANK GUNN, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

The Raptors' DeLon Wright celebrates his late-game three-pointer against the Washington Wizards during Game 5 of their first-round playoff series in Toronto on Wednesday. The Raptors won 108-98.

Raptors top Wiz in Game 5

By IAN HARRISON
Associated Press

TORONTO — The Toronto Raptors rode to a seldom-used lineup to move within a game of advancing in the NBA playoffs.

DeMar DeRozan scored 32 points, Kyle Lowry had 17 points and 10 assists and the Raptors beat the Washington Wizards 108-98 on Wednesday night in Game 5.

Toronto rebounded after losing Games 3 and 4 on the road to take a 3-2 series lead back to Washington for Game 6 on Friday night. The home team has won all five games in the series.

The only team in the NBA to avoid losing three straight at any point this season, the Raptors went 5-0 following back-to-back losses during the regular season, and have not lost three straight since last year's second-round sweep against Cleveland. The last time Toronto lost three regular-season games in a row was from Feb. 8 to 14, 2017.

Raptors center Jonas Valanciunas had not played a single

fourth-quarter minute in the series before getting the call down the stretch to play alongside DeLon Wright, Lowry, DeRozan and C.J. Miles, a group that barely shared the floor this season.

"We're all capable of going it offensively and defensively and it showed tonight," DeRozan said. "Everybody stepped up and DeLon stepped up big."

Raptors coach Dwane Casey acknowledged he was "searching" for the right lineup combination. "I thought DeLon Wright did a good job down the stretch handling the ball," Casey said. "It gave us an opportunity for Kyle and DeMar to get off the ball a little bit more and I thought that was the difference."

Wright scored 11 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter, and Valanciunas had 14 points and 13 rebounds as the Raptors improved to 5-0 in home Game 5s over the past five years.

"DeLon Wright came in and made some big shots and big plays for them," Washington's John Wall said. "Whenever he gets over 10 or 15, nine times out

of 10 they win the game. He's a big key to their team when they go small."

Wall had 26 points, and Bradley Beal added 20 for the Wizards. They went nearly four minutes without scoring down the stretch. Marcin Gortat had 10 points and 12 rebounds.

Washington shot 8-for-24 in the fourth quarter, and Toronto had 15 rebounds in the final frame.

"We feel like we let one slip away," Wall said. "They made the biggest shots at the end of the game."

Toronto trailed 87-82 after a three-point play by Kelly Oubre Jr. with 8:52 left, but regained the lead with a 6-0 run over the next 1:20.

After Washington's Markieff Morris dunked with 4:06 left, Wright replied with a three and, after a missed shot by Wall, converted a layup off a pass from DeRozan to give the Raptors a 99-93 lead with 2:59 remaining.

Washington didn't score again until Beal's three with 16 seconds left.

SPORTS



Bruins best Leafs

Boston advances with victory over Toronto in Game 7 » **Page 58**

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Built around five-time All-Star Anthony Davis, the Pelicans are fast becoming NBA's latest small-market success story

BY BRETT MARTEL
Associated Press

With every Anthony Davis put-back dunk, reverse alley-oop jam, step-back three-pointer or game-sealing block in the playoffs, the New Orleans Pelicans take a step closer to becoming the NBA's next small-market success story. That didn't quite happen with Chris Paul, who essentially forced a trade after his sixth season in the Big Easy amid concerns about uncertain ownership.

'I love the city of New Orleans. I love playing for the city. The city's showed me a lot of love, so I couldn't ask for a better place to be.'

Anthony Davis
Pelicans forward

The 25-year-old Davis is now in his sixth season in New Orleans. And the five-time All-Star is not only playing historically good basketball, but seems to see no need for moving vans in order to go ring hunting.

Davis, after all, was a young fan when Reggie Miller was in the twilight of an 18-year career with Indiana that transformed the Pacers into playoff regulars — and while Tim Duncan

was embarking on a long career in San Antonio highlighted by five NBA titles.

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PLAYOFFS

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New Orleans' Anthony Davis averaged 33 points, 12 rebounds and nearly three blocks per game during the Pelicans' first-round sweep of the Portland Trail Blazers.

DOUG PARKER/AP



Top prospect Acuna scores in Braves debut » **Page 55**



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